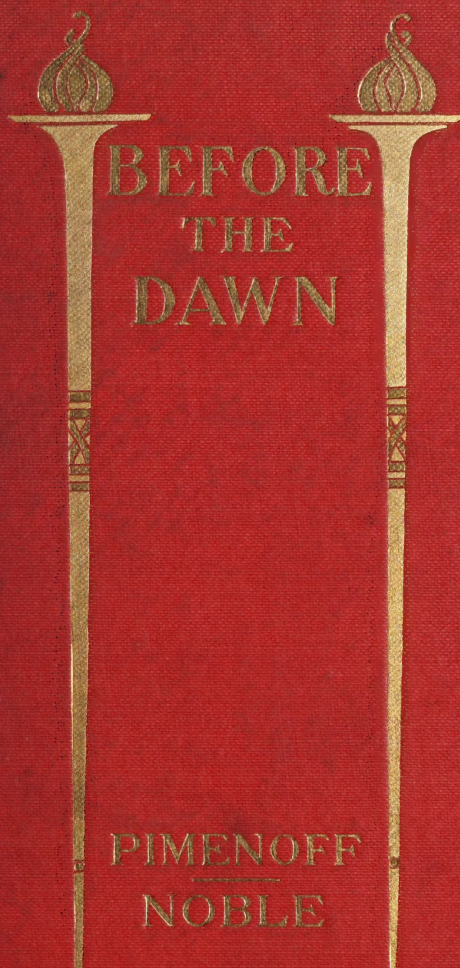




BEFORE
THE
DAWN

PIMENOFF
NOBLE

Q. P. sent to R. R. L 9/20/32

REFERENCE LIBRARY OF
HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY
2 PARK STREET, BOSTON



NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE SHELVES
EXCEPT BY PERMISSION OF
THE LIBRARIAN

REFERENCE LIBRARY * HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO. * BOSTON, MASS.

*Archive
Collection*



* This book may not leave the Office
and if borrowed must be returned within 7 days *

Edmund Noble

THE RUSSIAN REVOLT. Its Causes, Conditions, and Prospects, 16mo, \$1.00.

RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS. 12mo, \$1.50.

BEFORE THE DAWN: A Story of Russian Life.
By PIMENOFF-NOBLE. Crown 8vo, \$1.50.

HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO.

BOSTON AND NEW YORK.

BEFORE THE DAWN

A Story of Russian Life

BY

PIMENOFF-NOBLE



BOSTON AND NEW YORK
HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN AND COMPANY

The Riverside Press, Cambridge

1901

COPYRIGHT, 1901, BY LYDIA LVOVNA PIMENOFF NOBLE

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CONTENTS

CHAP.	PAGE
I. A RUSSIAN COUNTRY HOUSE	1
II. AT LÍKHACHOV'S IN THE LITÉINIA	22
III. GAY DOINGS AT SAMARKAND	39
IV. TANYA'S STORY AND THE BANKER'S SECRET	49
V. FORESTALLED BY A THEATRE PARTY	65
VI. A SURPRISE IN THE ASTRAKHÁNSKAYA	88
VII. FORSYTH GOES IN SEARCH OF TANYA	104
VIII. AT THE BULÁIEVS'	127
IX. ARRIVAL OF PLATÓNOV	144
X. THE "NEW ERA" IN EDUCATION	168
XI. A DREAM OF FREEDOM	186
XII. THE MIDNIGHT VISIT	202
XIII. LOVE AND JEALOUSY	222
XIV. ON THE ROAD TO MOSCOW	239
XV. THE PROPAGANDIST DISAPPEARS	263
XVI. AGAIN THE FATAL ASTRAKHÁNSKAYA	281
XVII. A MESSAGE FROM THE TRANSBAIKÁL	295
XVIII. "A VERY DANGEROUS KIND OF MAN"	313
XIX. CONSTANTINE'S PLUNGE INTO THE UNKNOWN	324
XX. AN IMPORTANT ORDER "CONFIRMED"	342
XXI. THE PAN ZBOROVSKI LENDS A HAND	355
XXII. RESTITUTION	370
XXIII. "BEQUEATHED BY BLEEDING SIRE TO SON"	394

BEFORE THE DAWN

CHAPTER I

A RUSSIAN COUNTRY HOUSE

ON the first morning of his holidays at the Lyceum, John Forsyth set out for the river, and boarded a steamer at the quay. The frost had all vanished; the flood, now at its height, sparkled in the May sun from a million dancing facets; already the sudden green of a St. Petersburg spring had fringed both banks of the Neva. An Italian sky now overarched the northernmost capital of Europe, where nature seemed to have transformed a mere icefield dotted with habitations into a Swiss paradise with its blue and flowing Rhône.

The schoolmaster not only felt with exhilaration the metamorphosis which annually astonishes foreigners in the Russian capital; there was something in the sights and scenes around him that harmonized with his own mood. He thought first of his solitary work in that dingy suburb of London, and of the pilgrimage he used to make at Easter time to the Thames; then of his sister's

exhortation, and of his final determination to cast in his lot with hers, in order to be near the only life that was now bound to him by ties of blood. He also remembered his visit, all too hurried, to the quiet little Lincolnshire churchyard, where his parents slept side by side ; his long voyage from Hull through the ice pack in the Baltic ; his final landing at St. Petersburg ; and then his months of anxious, poorly remunerated toil, from which the rich banker at last rescued him. He could now go forward with hope. If nature had been reborn out of the darkest winter he had ever known, he felt that there was renaissance also in his soul.

Then, as the gangway plank was drawn in, and the steamer began to move upstream, other thoughts occupied his mind. Thus far he was only at the beginning of his experiences in a country still in many ways strange to him. His ideas of "Rooshia," as the country people at home called it, had been gained mainly from books ; for long his mental symbols of the land and people had come to him, strangely enough, from much reading of narratives of the Crimean War. Yet the crudeness of his knowledge had now disappeared ; with the aid of German and French grammars he had even made considerable progress in the acquirement of the Russian language, and could already speak it with passable fluency. Best of all, gaining acquaintance with the people at first-

hand, he had worked himself free from that spuriously critical attitude which foreigners are apt to assume when they first come in contact with an unfamiliar race. And now that the first shock of surprise had passed away, he felt himself in the presence of a civilization rich in interest, and full of problems that had never occurred to him in the older world he had left behind. True, his surroundings impressed him with the rather commonplace attraction of newness, yet to an artistic temperament like his they appealed with the still deeper charm of things unknown and unexplored.

Hence, as he took a seat on the upper deck of the steamer, two clear pictures which had left their imprint upon his imagination were willingly recalled. One of them was of the first afternoon on which the northern city had burst upon him in its strange, half eastern splendor. Approaching it from the river, he had seen its panorama of palaces suddenly unfolded, and had carried his eye to the empyrean above, where, in the twilight, lay the brooding domes of countless churches, — some gilded over with the hues of the sun, others tinted with the pale green of the sea, still others blue like the heaven and dotted with stars. Another picture brought back, with like vividness, the impressions yielded by his first walk along the thoroughfares of the city. For on that day, never to be forgotten, he had paced the granite

quays till almost footsore, rambling through high-walled streets that seemed like the deserted beds of dried-up rivers; had paused in the solitary, wind-swept squares, and stood before the mighty monuments; had passed in and out of the great quadrangles, and had considered the foreign architecture. Everywhere he had seen length, height, breadth, vastness, solidity; everywhere he had met contrast and contradiction, — of power and helplessness, of riches and poverty, of culture and ignorance. Yet of what it all meant he had thus far formed no theory; already he half suspected that some of his delight in the new civilization came from the consciousness that it must always remain for him more or less of a mystery.

The steamer was in midstream, puffing its way through a fleet of pleasure boats, passing floats heavy with hay, grazing barges laden with charcoal and wood, or turning aside to avoid collision with some vessel depressed almost to the water's edge by its burden of Finland granite; then darting under a bridge into the open water beyond, there again to thread its way through the busy life that filled the Neva with color and animation. Sounds of music were in the air, keeping time, as it seemed, with the ceaseless hammering from the woodyards; the cries of the boat-haulers sounded and resounded over the water, and through these there came at intervals the sharp voices of bells or the hoarse

tones of steam-whistles. By and by the palaces, the factories, the shipyards faded gradually from the river, and as the wooded shores came into view, dotted here and there with the country houses of the St. Petersburg gentry, the steamer would run into picturesque turns and windings of the river, and from time to time would stop at frail-looking rustic stages to land visitors who had come down from the capital to spend the day with friends, or to take on board passengers who sought conveyance to points further up the stream.

For a while Forsyth paced the deck, watching the changing phases of the river-scape, or scrutinizing the motley figures whom chance had made the temporary companions of his journey. Yet his eye sought in vain among his fellow passengers for a familiar face. There were French-speaking military officers going to Schlüsselburg; plump-faced, jocular merchants and their wives; a few peasants with implements returning from the capital to their country homes; three youths in students' caps, hotly discussing the latest set of university regulations; and a young girl reclining against the taffrail, intent on the pages of a Russian review. All these were strangers to him; and as the thought, by antithesis, suggested his own destination, he drew from his pocket a daintily written missive in English which ran as follows,—

DEAR MR. FORSYTH, — We are going to our country house at Lesnóye on the 10th of May, and wish you to spend with us the first day on which you may find yourself at liberty after that date. Please do not stand on ceremony, but come.

SOPHIA LÍKHACHOV.

Having perused the letter, the schoolmaster returned it to his pocket. Then he thought about the banker and his family, about his own sister, about Miss Sophia, about her brother Constantine, and finally about the young lady he had met at the banker's, — "Tatiána" something. He tried to recall her family name, but could not for the life of him, and finally agreed with himself that the name was of no importance. Then as he raised his eyes over the rail of the steamer, they suddenly encountered, not twenty paces away, at the end of a landing-stage which the boat was fast approaching, a graceful figure in shimmering white, whose oval features aroused his sluggish memory to activity, for in a moment he found himself muttering the name, "Tatiána Vladímirovna Lobanóva." The girls had come down, in light summer attire, armed with parasol and fan, to meet the morning boat, in the thought that haply it might bring a visitor. The schoolmaster sprang from his seat, crossed the gangway, and was soon shaking hands with them.

"How lucky we came!" exclaimed Sonya.¹ "Father said that you would have your holidays early, and that we might expect you from the beginning of the week."

"This is my first day of leisure," Forsyth returned. "It is also my first day afloat. I was indeed glad of the opportunity to come."

"You have had a busy winter, Mr. Forsyth," suggested Tanya² sympathetically.

"I have. But the most difficult part of my work is now over. My pupils and I understand one another. They are not only fond of their English studies; they show an enthusiasm which makes the task of instruction a pleasure."

"And what are your plans for the summer?" asked Sonya.

"I have not formed any. A few visits, probably an occasional outing, the rest of the time study."

"Study?"

"Yes, indeed. My old English master used to say that a teacher who did not study was lost. I always held that to be true in England, — how much more important for me to bear it in mind in Russia, where everything is so new and unfamiliar."

"Well, you have done wonders already," ventured Sonya; and then, after a pause, "in the difficult art of understanding us."

¹ Diminutive of Sophia.

² Diminutive of Tatiána.

“Do you really think so?”

“I do, indeed. You know that we are not savages, for example.”

“And that we do not eat candles,” quickly added Tanya.

A merry laugh from the girls, in which Forsyth joined heartily, turned the current of his thought into lighter channels; and thus conversing, the three approached a country house not without some pretensions to appearance. It was a large, two-story building, with daintily carved front, bow-windows on the lower floor, and a capacious veranda skirting the two sides. The structure fell back a considerable distance from the road, and seemed to lose itself in the rich, environing foliage. To the rear, the land ran into little hills and hollows, which a clever gardener had adorned with dainty flower-beds, traversed by well-kept pathways amply provided with rustic seats. On the highest point of the grounds a round summer-house, surmounted by a flagstaff, gave a view over the surrounding country.

“This is our *dacha*,”¹ said Sonya. “Father will be glad to see you. Pray come in.”

The girls pushed their way through the open door, and almost before the schoolmaster could seat himself in the reception-room, his sister entered with Nyanya.² A few moments later the banker

¹ Russian country house.

² Nurse.

himself came in. Líkhachov was a man who, though already past middle age, yet carried himself with a certain alertness, and gave the impression of being in robust health. His face was of generous breadth; blue eyes stamped it with a look of honest frankness; yet it had lines here and there which told of business acuteness and of hard knocks received from the world. Above, the rather low forehead seemed to retreat into a thin growth of hair, carefully smoothed; below, a short beard completed the countenance with a peculiar fringe of iron gray.

The banker shook hands cordially with Forsyth as with an old acquaintance, and the grasp was returned with a pressure which came from the heart. The schoolmaster knew he was welcome, and soon found that during the afternoon and evening he was to make many new acquaintances. The Líkhachov *dacha* had long been noted for its hospitality. The banker prided himself on his skill as an entertainer; and to test it, his friends came from far and wide. The family never dined alone at Lesnóye; frequently the influx of guests was great enough to test the resources of the establishment to the utmost. As, moreover, the Líkhachov invitations always brought literary and professional people, the banker's afternoons in *dacha* were never known to lack for either intellectual or social entertainment.

Forsyth's early arrival thus gave him plenty of time for anticipation. On this particular afternoon, seated in an angle of the veranda, he could see through the open window of the dining-room, and also had a view over a large part of the grounds. His sister was busy working some embroidery for a pair of slippers which he was soon to wear; Sonya had flitted about during the forenoon; Nyanya was in the kitchen; the banker had retired for a nap. Of Tanya the schoolmaster had seen little since his arrival save a glimpse now and then of her white, fluttering figure as it stooped over a flower-bed, or, entering the house, passed swiftly through the rooms. All at once she came from the reception-room, and without noticing his presence, took a seat in the opposite corner of the veranda. The girl had an open book in her hand; the breeze played with its leaves as she gazed down the road toward the landing-stage. A rose, fresh from some hot-house, lay in the folds of her dress; another nestled in the coils of her hair. The uncovered head carried itself lightly, and yet with dignity. As for the face, it was typically Russian, with a beautiful oval which at once struck the beholder, — a countenance to which the rather full lips and dimpled chin gave a girlish charm, while the broad forehead, from which the wavy brown hair fell away on each side, crowned it with the thought and seriousness of

womanhood. Having waited awhile for visitors, Tanya turned to her book. Then it was that, with the sense of her nearness upon him, there came to Forsyth a complex feeling which in its turn recalled a much earlier experience. He had once, in a public assembly, when sitting side by side with a Hindu woman, realized all the wonder and grandeur which the far-away East ever held for his imagination. Into his momentary conception of her there came crowding everything he had ever read or heard of her race. A foreign woman only, yet in that one woman all India — the India of history, of travel, of romance — seemed incarnated; unbeautiful as she was, he had invested her with an awe, a majesty, and a charm that nothing human, he felt convinced, could ever again suggest.

This experience had been helpful to him, for he was led to recognize that in a foreigner we see not only the individual, but also the race, — its environment, history, and literature, its great living and dead; and that just in proportion as our knowledge of these is wide are the richness and fullness of the estimate we form of the individual. He now found himself, in a less purely intellectual way, going through a like experience with regard to Tanya, who had already begun to represent for him all that he had learned to include under the term "Slav." It was an aid

to his mental processes to meet a typical native, whose words and intellectual attitude — nay, whose very features — served to give a sort of objective reality to the pictures of Russian life with which his studies had supplied him since he left England. True, there was in all this the fascination of sex, yet as he had reached his twenty-eighth year, he felt he could trust to his emotional coolness to keep him out of danger.

All at once, by one of those telepathic monitions which seem obscurely to inform people when the minds of others are intent on them, Tanya was impelled to turn her head, and she saw Forsyth at the opposite angle of the veranda. He had picked up a leaf, and was carelessly twirling it between his fingers. He looked up again, and noticed that the girl was gazing at him.

“Mr. Forsyth,” said she, with a look at once shy and serious, “I am in a dilemma. Won’t you help me?”

In a moment the schoolmaster was at her side. She was reading a volume of “The Principles of Psychology,” and not having her Reiff at hand, had come to a full stop in the middle of a difficult sentence. Forsyth now put the words into as good Russian as he could command, whereupon the sense at once became clear to her.

“We have a compendium of Spencer in Russian,” she explained, “but it is so brief and un-

satisfactory that I determined to obtain an English version. This copy of the first volume I borrowed from one of the professors."

"You are fond of Spencer's writings, then?" asked Forsyth, endeavoring to recall his own fragmentary knowledge of the "Synthetic Philosophy."

"I am," said Tanya, "but perhaps not more so than other Russians of my acquaintance. We regard him as our philosopher *par excellence*, just as we regard Shakespeare as our poet."

"But you have had philosophical writers of your own, as well as poets?"

"None of any eminence; certainly none who have founded schools. If any such ever appear in Russia," Tanya added with a smile, "depend upon it, they will be Spencerians."

"And agnostics?"

"I have not thought much of that aspect of the matter. I do not even yet know whether I am an agnostic or not. Yet I am sure that Spencer's method of reasoning suits me better than anything I have hitherto met with. It is objective, shall I not rather call it realistic? That is why it is so intensely Russian."

"Spencer's style is especially clear," commented the listener.

"Clear?" she repeated. "It is lucidity itself. Then again, how concise! Not a word too little or too much! No flourishes or embellishments!"

You get the idea in its most direct and forcible form, not veiled in mannerisms that delay your grasp of the author's meaning. There is really no style in Spencer, and yet, to my mind, that is the perfection of style. Everybody ought to write in that way, and the time will come when everybody will."

Forsyth watched the girl's rising enthusiasm with a sensation akin to delight. So he let her run on for a minute or two, not daring to interrupt. Then he observed, "What of the poets, Miss Lobanóva, — would you exclude them from your republic?"

"I would have no banishment," she replied, with a proud toss of the head, "and I should want to encourage realists like Shakespeare and Goethe, who express in their best writings great objective truths. That is the only concession I should care to make to the rhyming gentry. As for the rest, — the romanticists, I think you call them, — I would give them something better to do."

"Then you would sacrifice some of the finest things in Russian literature. Think of Pushkin, Lérmontov, and the others. Don't you need poets like these to soften the painful monotony of much of your Russian life? Do they not arise naturally out of the very need for them?"

"Doubtless there would be many exceptions to my rule. For the romanticist in the realistic mood

I should have great toleration. I regard Tom Hood's 'Song of the Shirt,' for example, as one of the grandest poems ever written. If all poetry could only be full of meaning and utility as that is" —

She did not finish the sentence, but the school-master fully understood her meaning. "You speak," he began again, "of utility. You will surely admit that the romanticists have at least one positive merit. They sing, it is true, of fair skies, of laughing waters, of gayly plumaged birds, of beautiful women. Do they not give a glory to the world which it would otherwise lack, and do they not in this way, even from a scientific point of view, make life more agreeable and more worth living than it could ever be without them? Think what the poets have done even for your own country."

"I should not care to have life rendered attractive for me by a falsehood. It does not matter to me so much whether my conception of life is an agreeable or a disagreeable one, but it matters greatly to me whether it is true or not."

"And yet one's view of life may be true and romantic at the same time."

"In some respects it may," the girl replied. "Yet I distrust romanticism when I remember that it flourishes best where myths and superstitions root deepest, and where acquaintance with the nature of the world around us is at its lowest, — that is, among the savages. Besides, civilization is

due, not to the romanticists with their sensational pictures and fictitious theories of the world, but rather to the realists who, placing their reliance on exact knowledge, have steadily won their way to the comprehension and utilization of the forces of nature in the interest of man."

Here Forsyth felt that Tanya had somehow become versed in a form of thought to which he himself was largely a stranger. He saw now more clearly than ever how mutual comprehension of each other by human beings depends not merely upon the intelligibility of the simple elements of language, but also — perhaps as largely — upon similar mental experiences and like intellectual processes. "Yet you will admit," he ventured, "that in our modern romanticism there is at least an element of truth."

"Romanticism," returned Tanya, shaking her head, "is the same thing to-day that it has always been. It tells us fairy stories in our childhood only in order that when we are more mature it may instill into us our religious beliefs."

Ere the schoolmaster could prepare a rejoinder, the opportunity had passed away. The guests were already beginning to assemble, and Tanya was needed within. She retired quickly, almost abruptly; returned for a moment as suddenly to look around as if in search of something she had dropped; then, disappointed, passed back into the reception-room with Sonya, who had come out

in search of her friend. As soon as the girls had gone, Forsyth drew forth the flower he had picked up. A Russian rose so fair and fine as that, and with an aroma so distinctive, at once piqued and perplexed him. As he looked at it, he mused on what he had heard. Did he think of it merely with the interest of a botanist, or was he not rather wondering why he might not interrogate it as he had interrogated her?

The schoolmaster, like the others, soon found his way into the reception-room, which was already crowded with guests. Most of the visitors were occupants of other country houses in the neighborhood of Lesnóye; the rest included a few of Constantine's acquaintances, whom the guardsman had brought up with him from the city by the afternoon boat. Forsyth, who had been introduced for the twentieth time before he took his seat, tried in vain to recall half the names he had heard. Only a few of them left anything like a clear impression upon his mind. Among the first to greet him was his friend, General Iván Petróvich Windt, in whose family he had spent a couple of months as instructor, — a short, stoutly built, ruddy-faced man of some forty summers, who had retired from the army to take a lucrative government appointment, which gave him many opportunities of foreign travel. His wife, Claudine, some ten years his junior, was a tall, brown-eyed lady, with a good-natured face, sym-

pathetic manners, and light, graceful movements. Accompanying them was the Baroness von Bretzel, the pretty amateur painter, who had enough of a reputation as a wit to make her somewhat formidable at social gatherings. Pavel Yefimich Livánov, a sedate St. Petersburg editor, had brought down, two months after marriage, his girlish young wife, whom the gossips regarded as a typical *institutka*,¹ for he had taken her directly from the establishment in which she had been educated. One of the best known of the guests was Madame Sukhómlina, a mild-looking lady wearing spectacles, who wrote stories for the children's magazines, and was helping her husband to compile an historical manual for the gymnasia. In and out among the groups stalked Gregor Yákovlich Semévsky, a tall, slender man, with a fiery red beard, penetrating eyes, and set stare, — peculiarities which had procured for him the nickname of the "Censor," though he was a quite unobtrusive official from the Ministry of Agriculture and Domains.

At table the banker was in his element. As host, he had genial, fatherly ways that won everybody. To Forsyth they suggested what a Russian patriarch might have been in the days of serfdom. Near Líkhachov sat the members of his household, together with his intimate friends.

¹ Girl pupil of an educational establishment bearing the name of Institute.

Constantine had taken place beside Tanya, while Strélnikov, the handsome guardsman, devoted himself to Sonya. It was a veritable dinner in *dacha*, full of the light-heartedness of summer *idlesse*, and vocal with genuine Russian unconventionality. Above the clatter and din of knives, forks, and plates rose the incessant hum of voices, broken only by the loud calls of the guardsmen to each other, or by frequent bursts of laughter. In such a gathering, the fear of one's own voice, which tames the boldest in countries like England, had no place, and everybody talked at the top of his bent, — now in French, now in English, now in Russian, as the whim of the moment might dictate. The schoolmaster liked so novel an experience, nor did he feel in the least bored when two young misses asked him point blank what he thought of Byron.

Then he fell into a reverie, from which he was aroused by hearing, some distance away, conversation about Tanya. To this he listened eagerly, for he was anxious to learn something of her relatives and friends, something of her comings and goings; even a glimpse at her intellectual habits and interests would have been welcome. But he found the talk idle, not to say irresponsible, and had to content himself with bits of negative information, — such, for example, as that Tanya's relatives, if any still lived, were unknown, and that she had some sort of a guardian in the provinces who looked

after her financial needs. As to what he heard about her "self-reliance," her "independence of mind," her "rare intellectual promise," etc., — these were things which he knew for himself, much as it pleased him to hear his thought repeated.

By this time the guests had risen, and were moving towards the open air. As they came forth, the warm day was burning itself out above the long scape of land and river across which one looks from Lesnóye towards St. Petersburg. At first they scattered, some strolling this way, some that; but when the waiters served tea, the alluring beverage called them together again round the family samovar. Meanwhile, as daylight faded, a new illumination arose as thousands of Chinese lanterns, with which busy hands had interlaced the foliage and decorated the house, were suddenly lit; then, from all the neighboring residences, answering fires burst forth, until the whole country side seemed aflame with the mimic conflagration.

The remainder of the evening was spent indoors. Beneath the gay lights of the *dacha* the guests played cards, joined in games with the young people, or talked apart. Finally Forsyth strolled out into the grounds, lighting a cigar as he went. It was now past eleven o'clock, though there was still a glimmer in the sky. He walked for a while, then seated himself on a bench. The impressions of a rather noisy evening here recurred to him:

one by one his memories of it flitted through his brain. Yet he did not long busy himself with things indifferent. Interests of the heart which he had not before confessed to himself began to assert their supremacy over merely intellectual preoccupations; soon Forsyth found the lineaments of Tanya taking definite shape in his imagination.

This strange Russian girl, then, fascinated him already, brief as had been the period of their acquaintance! Could he accuse the beautiful oval face, with its luminous brown eyes, that had drawn him unawares; or was it the girlish-womanly figure, aided by the quick brain behind the smooth forehead, that had woven the spell? Perchance one of those powerful attractions which depend largely on differences of race, stimulated by common intellectual pursuits, perhaps also by the sense of her loneliness and of his? Or simply the mysterious moving nature in each that, apart from all outward sign, subtly links man to woman ere the bond can be perceived? He could not tell. Enough that he was conscious of the new empire which had been set up over him; and though the realm of sleep, as that night it drew near, brought a feeling of perplexity, even of sadness, he turned to it in the true spirit of worship, for in his soul shone the image of Tatiána Vladímirovna!

CHAPTER II

AT LÍKHACHOV'S IN THE LITÉINIA

AT three o'clock on a frosty afternoon in St. Petersburg, when the darkling sky already foretold the speedy approach of night, and the Nevsky Prospékt lay snow-carpeted from end to end, there were sounds of winter revelry in the famous thoroughfare, and loud over the hissing of sleigh-irons could be heard the merry jingling of innumerable bells. Along the broad pavement itself countless vehicles of every type known to the Russian capital raced back and forth; while on the sidewalks of the Prospékt moved that strange *pêle-mêle* of characteristic figures and picturesque costumes which gives the northern city so much of its interest for visitors from western Europe. On this particular afternoon the curious eye of a strolling foreigner would have seen officers in long cloaks that half disclosed the gray uniform beneath; merchants wearing heavy fur coats with the collars turned high up over the heads that almost disappeared in them; spectacled students with plaid shawls jauntily thrown over their shoulders; bright-buttoned officials going home with shuffling

step from the departments ; uniformed lads just let loose from the military academies ; girls whose warm furs had been buttoned over the regulation apron and formal attire of the high schools ; an occasional peasant in sheepskin wending his way home with some purchase made in the "Frozen Market" or the Gostínnoy Dvor ; a *dvornik*, or house-porter, in sheepskin, setting out on or returning from some errand ; sleigh-drivers in high hats, their tightly clinging coats belted at the middle, pursuing possible customers with offers of cheap rides ; an occasional figure of almost giant-like proportions in the gorgeous uniform of the Imperial Guards ; and may be, here and there, a Circassian soldier from the Caucasus, with well-filled cartridge box slung across his breast.

Had the foreigner's glance been attentively directed to the equipages in mid-thoroughfare, he might have noticed how, by skillful manœuvring on the part of the driver, a single *troika*, containing a solitary passenger, emerged from the thick of the throng into a clear space just below the Anichkin Bridge, and then turned sharply into the Litéinia. The vehicle, after passing some distance down the Litéinia, entered a side street, and stopped before a tall, handsome building with a *porte cochère*. Then the passenger quickly ascended the broad stairway to the second floor and there rang for admittance at a doorway on the

front of which shone a small brass plate bearing the name, in Roman letters, "Líkhachov."

The door having been opened by a servant in livery, Líkhachov — for it was indeed the banker — divested himself of coat and hat, and passed into the drawing-room. He took a seat near the window, and drawing half a dozen letters from his pocket, hastily ran them over with his eye. Selecting one from the number, and returning the rest to their envelopes, the banker touched a silver handbell on the table near him.

"Is Miss Forsyth at home?"

"Yes," replied the servant.

"Then say I have returned, and light the large lamp."

The clock on the mantel had just struck four when the English governess entered the room. Her prim, rather severe figure relaxed visibly as Líkhachov handed her a letter.

"Your brother," he said, noticing the handwriting, "is doing well at the Lyceum. He is in luck, I assure you, for one who has not been in the country more than a year."

Miss Forsyth bowed her assent.

"Is Sonya home from the Courses?" suddenly asked the man of affairs.

"Not yet. But I expect her soon."

"I suppose she is now quite clever in her English."

"She talks fluently, and reads everything I can get for her. She is the most industrious pupil I ever had. If her health were only better" —

A shade passed over the banker's face as he drew his chair near to the table and took up the latest issue of the "*Nóvoe Vrémya*." Miss Forsyth left him deeply involved in its financial columns.

Líkhachov had been for at least a quarter of a century a resident of the Litéinia; he was well known among moneyed people as the successful banker of the Grand Morskáya. His immediate neighbors had heard little of his antecedents; in truth, they had no reason to busy themselves with the possibilities of such a man's past. Everybody who knew anything of him knew that he was a widower, that his young wife had died some years after his appearance in the Litéinia; that he had a son in the Guards and a daughter at the Pedagogical Courses for Women; and that his household, from the time of his bereavement, had been managed by a family nurse and an English governess. Beyond this, all was mere speculation; and when a man is rich, as he was, even speculation is not over-inquisitive. That Líkhachov had an established position was undoubted. He carried on a large banking establishment, against the integrity of which nobody had ever breathed a word. He was, moreover, the owner of one of the finest

residences on the Liténia, and received rents from the occupants of five sumptuously furnished flats. Beyond this, people knew him as a large investor in shares, nor had he disclosed the full extent of his wealth even to business associates. Few of his acquaintances doubted that he was enormously rich; and if the question whether he was happy or not ever arose in their minds, as it sometimes did, they remembered the shadow of loneliness that darkened the man's life.

The banker did not linger long over his favorite newspaper. With an uneasy movement he rose from his seat and began to pace the waxed floor of the long room, turning aside every now and then to avoid collision with a potted plant, a screen, a divan, or a chair, or pausing to glance through the double window at the lights in the street below. By and by, finding that the atmosphere, which seemed only warm when he entered, had become oppressive, he opened a revolving ventilator in one of the panes. A gust of cold air entered, and with it came a snatch of instrumental music from some military band. Líkhachov closed the ventilator with a snap; as he turned from the window, there was a look of disgust as well as of weariness on his face.

"How ill you look, Papásha!" A slight, girlish figure stood on the threshold of the room, with one hand clasping the doorpost. Her face was

still flushed from contact with the frosty air, and the large eyes sparkled brilliantly.

"Yes, Sonya, I am not feeling well. The air here is warm, and — I think these rooms are not well ventilated. Besides, I have been overworking myself at the office."

"Well, father, put down your paper, and come at once to dinner. I have brought you a visitor. For the rest of the evening, remember, you are to give yourself to me."

"And who is the visitor, pray?" asked the banker languidly.

"Tanya Lobanóva. She is my best friend, you know," added the girl impulsively, as she threw an arm around her father's neck.

The banker looked caressingly into the girl's face.

"Ah, yes," he said, in a tone of playful *raillerie*, "one of our advanced women!"

"Yes, Papásha, that is what we call them. I wish all women were as advanced as she, — it would be a good thing for our country."

"Our country?" he repeated, with a puzzled air.

"Yes, father. But come quickly. We can discuss that later."

Líkhachov followed his daughter into the dining-hall. It was a long, well-lighted room, on the main wall of which hung a marine picture by Aiva-sóvsky, and a painting of Tamára, the heroine of

Lérmontov's famous poem. Here the banker found Nyanya, his son Constantine, Miss Forsyth, and Miss Lobanóva. They were discussing the Aivasóvsky picture when he entered. After greetings had been exchanged, all crossed themselves and then, with a glance at the holy image, took places. Líkhachov sat at the head of the long table, and had the two girls near him. Next came Constantine, *vis-à-vis* with Miss Forsyth, and finally Nyanya, who, with the privilege of an old servant, was accustomed to join the family at meals.

The banker said but little during dinner. He was in an uncommonly thoughtful mood, and with the exception of the few words exchanged between him and his visitor, the brunt of the conversation fell upon Sonya, her brother Constantine, and Miss Forsyth, all of whom seemed in high spirits, and talked incessantly. It was Constantine who provided the amusement of the occasion ; for when, in telling them the latest incidents of his military experience, he brought his knife and fork down with a sharp rattle upon the plate, even the waiter, with a broad grin on his face, paused to listen. Now and then the young man would sit bolt upright in his undress uniform, to mimic some superior officer or general whom he had made the hero of his story, his lips puckered up, his eyes half shut, and his head moving alternately to right and

left; at such times the old nurse would gaze upon him with admiration, while Miss Forsyth and the girls would be almost convulsed with merriment.

At last dessert came, and when the banker had sipped his favorite Hungarian wine, the repast was over. Sonya approached first, and kissed her father, who returned the embrace; his hand was then shaken by Constantine, Miss Forsyth, and Tanya; whereupon the party passed into the drawing-room, Líkhachov, with Sonya on his arm, leading the way. Laughingly the girl drew him to his armchair; the rest disposed themselves not far away on divans and settees. Constantine lit a cigarette as he came in, took a seat, crossed his legs, puffed a cloud of smoke upwards, and sat gazing in a rapt attitude at the frescoed ceiling. Tanya had entered with the guardsman, but paused a moment indecisively before choosing her place. In an instant Sonya's arm was thrown around her waist, and the friends were sitting together.

"Well, Sonya," observed the banker, whose spirits had somewhat returned, "what of the lessons on sociology? Has the director decided to permit them?"

"We don't know, Papásha. The students have n't yet been informed. The decision rests, of course, with the director."

"And what, pray, is sociology?" asked Constantine, with an appealing look at Miss Forsyth.

"Some new fangled scheme, I suppose, invented by the professors themselves."

"The very latest and most important of all the sciences, — that is to say, the sum of them all, the science of society," replied Sonya sententiously.

"But what do girls want with sociology?" retorted her brother. "Would n't they be better engaged learning to cook and keep house?"

"Well," replied Sonya, "Russia has millions of women who know how to cook and keep house, but very few who know why they are doing it. They labor in the fields; they marry and rear children; they go to mass and attend church ceremonies, without once asking why they do all these things, — indeed, they never think of asking. They might as well be so many machines. If only a few women can be taught the meaning of life, say, through the science of biology, as our professor tells us, that will be an enormous gain for all the rest."

The banker liked to hear his daughter talk, but on this occasion he watched her with an air of incredulity. "But what do your professors want us to understand by the meaning of life, Sonya? Does not our religion teach us that?"

"Yes, father, but it does not teach us medicine and surgery, the art of helping the sick and healing the wounded. We need instructed people to go among the peasants and show them how to keep

well, and how to get better when they fall ill. Let us have the prayers of the priests by all means, but give us plenty of reliable doctors, that we may save more lives and do away with this burden of ignorance and superstition in sanitary matters which is now so common and widespread."

"And the science of society, — what is that for?" asked the banker.

"Well, that will tell us our relations and duties to one another in civilized life. We shall know the nature of communities and the manner of their development in all the ages: that will help us to understand our own society and guide us in forming plans for its future."

"Has that anything to do with the police and the government?"

"It has to do with everything in human society. But I am yet only a learner. Tanya here has gone through Buckle and Spencer: she can tell you more than I. In fact" —

Tanya looked up with a deprecating smile.

"I don't exactly see the drift of all this," remarked the banker, taking the cigar from his mouth; "but it seems to me that it has the merit of being new, if that is a merit. I heard nothing of it when I was at school."

"Nor did I, father," exclaimed Constantine, springing to his feet and beginning to pace the room. "And I can't make out for the life of me

why the women should want such stuff. Excuse me, girls," he added, turning to Sonya and her friend with an apologetic bow, "but all this talk about learning and women's rights seems to me stupid, not to say idiotic. What is a girl going to do with her knowledge after she gets married?"

Sonya gazed at her brother in astonishment. "Costya!"¹ she began, with a minatory shake of the head.

"I'm quite serious, Sonya," he retorted. "I really like the girls, but I don't care to see them doing foolish things. When a woman gets married, she throws all these accomplishments to the winds, and studies, not sociology, but how to please her husband and children. Why, then, fill her mind with things that can never be of any use to her? You might as well teach Sanskrit to a peasant."

"But what about the women who don't marry, Constantine Serguéich?" asked Miss Forsyth. "Are n't they entitled to know something in addition to housekeeping?"

"Women who don't marry?" repeated the young man. "There are deuced few of them, you may depend upon it." He drew a gold cigarette case from his pocket, lit a *papyros*, and sank gracefully into a chair, adding, "It is the duty of all women to marry. The Empress herself believes it."

¹ Diminutive of Constantine.

"She admitted you into her confidence, I suppose," said Sonya.

"Oh, no. But the story is going the rounds, and I may as well tell it. Why, the whole regiment of Guards is in a state of trepidation at this very moment."

"Indeed?"

"Yes, and I'll tell you why. Our gracious Empress has long been seriously perplexed regarding the future of the thousands of young girls who flock to St. Petersburg for instruction, and as she believes their only safety depends on their having a family life of their own, she has determined to marry them off to the guardsmen. So every man in my regiment is hourly expecting his death sentence in the form of an imperial order commanding him to espouse some one or other of the girl students."

A shade of displeasure came into the face of the visitor. The banker, Miss Forsyth, and the nurse smiled in spite of themselves. Sonya hardly dared trust herself to speak, but felt that she must rebuke her brother, come of it what might.

"Costya," she said, "this is one of the idle stories you guardsmen invent *pour passer le temps*. I am surprised that you should repeat it, especially in the society of decent people."

"No disrespect to you and Tatiána Vladímirovna," cried Constantine. "I merely told the

story as I heard it. Perhaps it is a fiction,— who knows? At least you find it funny, *n'est-ce pas?*” added the young man tantalizingly.

“Funny!” exclaimed Sonya. “There is nothing funny in falsehood. Besides, there is an unworthy sneer in the story which all students ought to resent.”

“Pardon, sister. You forget that some of these girls do lay themselves open to just such stories. When a girl student cuts her hair short, wears a plaid shawl, puts on a short blouse belted at the middle, and dons blue spectacles, it does not take much wit to see that, while she has altogether ceased to be a woman, she is only the caricature of the opposite sex. Should that give her a passport to intellectual aristocracy, she is quite welcome to it, so far as I am concerned. But if we are to have men, I prefer them to be of the masculine gender.” Having delivered himself of this *tour de langue*, Constantine thrust his hands into his trousers’ pockets, and with his face turned upwards towards the ceiling, began to pace the floor of the room, puffing out sundry jets of smoke as he walked.

“Hear him, Tanya,” appealed the banker’s daughter, throwing her arm around her friend’s waist, and playing with the braided tresses that hung there.

A sudden light seemed to be kindled in Tanya’s

brown eyes, as she fixed them on the tall figure of the guardsman. "Constantine Serguééich," said she, "you have said something about caricatures. Permit me to remark that your own description is a caricature."

Hitherto the young man had not paid much attention to his sister's friend. But now, hearing himself subjected to criticism in a voice whose richness of tone did not disguise its perfect self-possession, he turned hastily to the girl with a curt "Do you think so?" on his lips. Yet the words were never spoken. Something in the aspect of her figure held him in check.

"Some of our girls," Tanya continued, "do adopt a distinctive dress, but in this they are actuated by the purest motives, — motives that deserve, not ridicule or pity, but respect. To say that they ape the dress and manners of men is a positive injustice. It is a slander pure and simple. They are content to be women, and among them are some of the most womanly women I know. Why do they wear a distinctive attire? I will tell you. It is a badge of emancipation, but it is also a means of union and mutual help. It enables the thoughtful, earnest students to differentiate themselves from the idle, frivolous, and less progressive; it facilitates their recognition of each other and their association on the basis of common desires and aspirations; it is, in a word,

the uniform of a society which has no friends in high places, and which cannot be legally organized, — a society, that is to say, of earnest young women who wish to help themselves and thereby to help the nation and the world.”

“Bravo!” cried Sonya, unable to suppress her enthusiasm.

“Well,” said Constantine, coming up and leaning on the back of his father’s chair. “I never heard it explained in that way before. All the same, I don’t like emancipated women, — they are *too* progressive. No offense, Tatiána Vladímirovna!” he added, with a wave of the hand. The young man took out his watch, and finding it to be already past nine o’clock, bade everybody adieu. With a hasty kiss for the nurse, he left the room.

Sonya now drew her friend to the piano. Throwing open the lid, she improvised awhile, leaving Tanya to forage in a pile of music that lay on the top of the frame. The wild notes awakened the banker from his reverie. He had been musing over what he had just heard. How strange it all seemed! A new world, only vaguely glimpsed as yet, but quite unlike that of his own life, with its sordid business interests, seemed to have been suddenly revealed to him. He had grown up from boyhood taking everything for granted, — the church, the government, the political hierarchy, the social distinctions, the good and evil of life, — and

here were young people, scarcely out of their teens, questioning the very order of society itself. Was this the "new generation," of which he had now and then read in the reviews? His own daughter, too! Who was this strange girl, her companion? And what did it all mean?

Yet his sense of so novel an intellectual attitude soon lost itself in the deeper anxiety suggested by the physical contrast before him, — the contrast between the frail, slender, almost sylph-like figure that bore his name, and the tall, well-proportioned girl who stood by her side, the personification of youthful vigor and robust health. Then came a flood of reminiscences, to the spell of which the banker could trust himself only in the seclusion of his own chamber.

It was already after midnight when he emerged. Robed in his dressing-gown and soft down slippers, he stealthily made his way to Sonya's room. Gently he pushed open the door, and with bated breath approached the screen which concealed from view the narrow white bedstead of his daughter. The lamps suspended before the holy images filled the sleeping-place with a faint, tender illumination. Sonya lay in the shade of the screen, her golden curls scattered over the snowy pillows. Her arms were thrown above her head, and the delicate hands clasped each other. There was no sound save that of troubled breathing; the bosom rose

and fell irregularly. As the father gazed on the face of his child, now pale after the excitement of the evening, hot, bitter tears rolled down his careworn cheeks. At last he bent over the slumberer, and lightly, with infinite precautions, kissed her on the forehead. Then he prostrated himself before the images. He had prayed he knew not how long, when suddenly he felt a hand laid upon his shoulder. Looking up, he recognized the wrinkled face of Nyanya, for it was she who was bending over him with a look full of pity and compassion; then, as in a dream, he heard the words: "Go to sleep, *batyushka*,¹ take thy rest. Everything is in the hands of the Lord. 'Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father.'"

¹ Father.

CHAPTER III

GAY DOINGS AT SAMARKAND

CONSTANTINE, having delivered himself of his protest against "emancipated women," descended the stairway to the street, took a sleigh, and drove to a private apartment house in the Offitsérskaya. Here, in a sumptuously furnished suite on the first floor, lived Mathilde Bergier, one of those typical figures who recall in St. Petersburg society certain phases of the gay and easy manners of the capital of France. The girl had reached her twenty-second year, though her looks made her seem at least five years younger. She was of medium height, and had a somewhat slender figure; but her plump arms and well-rounded bust showed her to be already a fully developed woman. In the face a freshness manifested itself not at all common in the Russian climate; the laughing black eyes, arched over by long silken lashes, wore a look of innocent mischief that greatly heightened their charm; while from above, all around the curved neck, the long dark curls fell to the shapely shoulders in a cascade.

Three years had elapsed since Constantine had visited her for the first time in the Offitsérskaya, —

three years since, established in luxurious quarters, she had first looked back with a feeling of relief upon the dismal past out of which she had so wearily emerged. Her earliest recollections called up the time when, as a girl of six or seven, she trudged after her parents, the so-called "Parisian beggars," as they dragged their organ through the streets of St. Petersburg. Then came her life as apprentice to a French milliner on the Málaya Morskáya, — an experience so painful that the mere recollection of it still cost her a shudder. How cold-hearted and wicked people were to her then! Bitter enough for her to remember that, at the beck and call of everybody, she had been little better than the slave of the establishment. Yet, overwork and long hours were but a small part of her trouble. They chastised her unmercifully. Poorly dressed on principle, she suffered constantly from the lack of nourishing and palatable food. The horror of that miserable *Frühstück* alone had left an indelible impression upon her mind. Salted herring and rye bread, — how it revolted her even now! Yet in spite of the overwork, in spite of the beatings, in spite of the poor food, Mathilde grew prettier year by year, until even the milliners were obliged to take notice of her good looks. True, they did not feed her any more sumptuously; and so the girl, born epicure that she was, went on hungering for the dishes that were as yet unattainable. But

her time of deliverance was already near at hand. For suitors came, and brought within her reach an abundance of the delicacies for which she longed. Nor was it many months before the half famished woman surrendered herself to a middle-aged *commis* from the Gostínnoy Dvor for the price of a bottle of champagne and a hot supper of four courses.

Lukhyánov proved a brutal fellow, and Mathilde suffered much in his society. There were, nevertheless, times when he accompanied her to the theatre or to some pleasure resort not of the best reputation. It was at one of these, the Winter Garden, that she first met Constantine. She was sitting at a small table, sipping beer with Lukhyánov, when a jovial party of guardsmen approached them and took seats at an adjacent table. The young men soon fell to drinking champagne, and as the sounds of their revelry waxed louder, Mathilde from time to time cast a coquettish glance at them. This so displeased Lukhyánov that he spoke to her angrily, and on her refusing to desist, loudly threatened to give her a beating when she reached their lodgings, at the same time striking the table heavily with his fist in token of his seriousness. Constantine heard the threat, and like the gallant guardsman that he was, promptly sprang to the pretty girl's rescue. Lukhyánov was too much disgusted with Mathilde's behavior to carry on much of an altercation with the newcomer; in

a moment he was seen striding from the spot with an air of offended dignity which seemed so ludicrous to the young men that they laughed outright. His abrupt departure left the field to Constantine. The girl pleased him. The very next day he established her in the handsome flat on the Offitsérskaya.

On this particular evening Constantine had planned a double entertainment, — a *soirée* at the theatre and an excursion to the gay island rendezvous known as “Samarkand.” They left the Mariinsky Theatre in a *troika* shortly after midnight, and were soon speeding their way over the Litéinia Bridge and along the Výborgskaya. Above them was a dark sky shot with stars, and around the white mantle of a St. Petersburg winter. The frosty air, the flying snow, the merry sound of bells, and the shouts of the sleighers made the journey an exhilarating one. Constantine, with his arm around Mathilde’s waist, encircling the thick wrap of sable which enveloped her, chatted gayly with his companion. Soon the environs were reached; tall fences succeeded to massive buildings; the gardens came; finally a wide plain of snow stretched before them on every side. The great train of sleighs in which they had traveled from the city was now thinned down to some half dozen equipages, and among these Constantine discovered several members of his own party. A few

moments more, and the revelers drew near the entrance to "Samarkand." It was a large building, — half hotel, half theatre, — containing dance-halls, banqueting-rooms, and suites of apartments reserved during the winter season for gay parties arriving from the city. A swarm of waiters, emerging from the gateway as the sleighs came to a standstill, hastened forward to aid the visitors in dismounting. Constantine himself lifted Mathilde from the *troika*; then the two, without waiting for the rest, passed to their room, preceded by the servant who had been assigned to attend upon them during their stay. Constantine helped Mathilde to remove her wraps, knelt down and took off her galoshes, and did not forget meanwhile to squeeze her dainty little foot.

After a moment's glance at her image in the mirror, Mathilde was ready. The couple passed down into the grand reception hall. They found themselves among the first of the arrivals.

"And who is to be here?" she asked.

"Oh," he replied, smiling at her eagerness, "we are sure of a distinguished company. Prince Viazémsky, Baron Korff, young Strélnikov, the princes Pavel and Vassily, and two or three other guardsmen, — the gayest of the regiment, depend upon it."

"And the women?" again queried his companion, with a toss of the head that made her curls dance.

"Ah, yes, the women," he mused, somewhat wearily. "Well, Stepánovich, of the *corps de ballet*, is here, — I saw her on the stairs; Louise, of the Opéra Comique, is to be counted on, — Strélnikov told me himself; and then we shall have that lovely rogue, Lucille."

"My word, a jolly party," exclaimed Mathilde.

"The jolliest!"

"And what is on the *menu*?" she suddenly demanded.

Constantine would have answered, but he was interrupted by peals of laughter and the sudden entrance of a crowd of gayly attired men and women. The young princes Pavel and Vassily, who were brothers, came in at the head of the party, each with a French actress on his arm. Just behind them were Strélnikov, tall and handsome, with his fellow guardsman Lópatin; then Prince Viazémsky, one of Constantine's chums, bringing in Mdlle. Stepánovich, a popular ballet dancer from the Grand Theatre.

All the men wore uniforms save Viazémsky. He had been afflicted from childhood with a slight limp in his walk; but the defect, while it shut him out from a military career, had never interfered with his gallantries. Though below the average stature, he prided himself on his successes with women, and took unusual pains to enhance, as much as was in his power, such attractions as

still remained to him. He had, for example, a head of luxuriant jet black hair that showed a tendency to curl; a rather narrow, aristocratic looking forehead; and, set over an eagle-like nose, a pair of eyes that would have made the face handsome had not their lustre been dimmed by debauchery. Viazémsky lived fast with the fastest of the smart set, and was an intimate friend of Constantine, yet the intimacy did not prevent him from envying the guardsman not only his robust physique and his military prestige, but also the pretty Mathilde.

Naturally, the Frenchwomen attracted general attention. While all had been dowered by nature with the unrivaled piquancy of their race, each contrived to shine among the rest by some peculiar grace of her own. Perhaps "Petite Jeanette," as her acquaintances called her, showed most vivacity, besides displaying a flow of wit and repartee not to be matched; and if she had the just noticeable blemish of irregular features, why, that was fully atoned for, as everybody admitted, by the whiteness and regularity of her pearly teeth. Then Lucille, though lacking the conversational power of her rival, presented a magnificently developed physique, the charm of which, with its swan-like throat, rounded shoulders, and face of marble pallor, surrounded by a wealth of reddish-golden hair, drew every beholder. And if Jeanette had

coquettish movements that captivated the fancies of men ere they saw her face or heard her speak, Lucille passed from pose to pose with a slow, graceful, languid motion that took them by storm. The one could dazzle her admirers with repartee until they forgot her personal attractions; the other, divesting herself of her sable wrap and throwing herself into a Turkish divan, radiant in her *decolleté* dress of pale green moire, had every one at her feet without saying a word. As for Stepánovich, she was still a pretty young thing of eighteen or nineteen, fresh from her graduation at the Theatrical School; had already kicked herself into the favor of the gilded youth of the capital; and that very night had been pirouetting in the "Daughter of Pharoah" for an hour before her public when Prince Viazémsky called for her in his carriage.

So the merry crowd surged in, talking at the top of their voices, just as the waiters were making the final arrangements for supper. This was to be served in the adjoining hall. The long table already glittered with its load of silverware; here and there among the pieces stood vases filled with choice flowers; while from above the tall banquet lamps cast a warm pink glow over the scene. Just on the right of the entrance was a side-table on which had been spread the *zakuska*, at which Russians are wont to sharpen their appetite in

preparation for dinner. The mere sight of the delicacies here displayed set Mathilde's mouth watering.

While the party were partaking of *zakuska*, a troop of gypsy minstrels entered. At once the sounds of a gay chorus, full of strange, staccato passages, rose above the hum of conversation. Everybody welcomed the unexpected diversion, and for half an hour the fascination of alien music, added to that of lively gestures and picturesque costumes, held the listeners spell-bound.

Finally the strains of song died away, and the banqueting-hall quickly filled up with guests. The diners found awaiting them an elaborate *menu* of a dozen courses that included — to the delight of Mathilde — not only many characteristically Russian dishes, but also ingenious products of the French, German, and even the English *cuisine*. As, moreover, an apparently unlimited supply of champagne was forthcoming, — brought to the table in great bowls, — the revelers united in declaring that it was the gayest party they had ever attended.

How the supper ended nobody ever quite remembered ; though most of those present recalled afterwards that at its close Mdlle. Stepánovich, with tipsy Viazémsky for her partner, danced a *can-can*, and wound up her performance by deftly, with the tip of her dainty boot, kicking the eyeglass from the nose of the prince.

When morning broke over St. Petersburg, the diversions of the smart set at "Samarkand" were at an end, and Constantine, with the sleepy Mathilde folded in his arms, was rolling in his *troika* back to the capital.

CHAPTER IV

TANYA'S STORY AND THE BANKER'S SECRET

TANYA lived near the U Pyati Uglov, — a part of St. Petersburg at which, as the name implies, five corners meet. There she occupied a neatly furnished room on the third floor in one of the great apartment houses of the better class. From the front she could gaze upon the busy life of the thoroughfare below ; in the rear she had outlook into a capacious quadrangle, the four high walls of which were dotted with hundreds of windows. In the centre of the square, through which sleigh-drivers, porters, peddlers, and old women were continually passing and repassing, an oblong plot struggled to justify its reputation as a garden ; and certainly the few hardy plants and shrubs within it had survived the cold of winter.

Tanya's chamber, besides being airy and well lighted, was somewhat better provided than most of the students' apartments to be met with in St. Petersburg. She had fitted it up primarily for study, yet its appearance suggested social uses ; it contained chairs and lounges enough to accommodate a fairly large party. A few tasteful pictures,

alternated here and there with a statuette or a mirror, adorned the walls. Near one of the windows stood an *escritoire*, over which were stretched bookshelves that held Tanya's literary treasures. These included the Russian poets; several volumes of Tourghénéff, Tolstóy, Góncharov, and Dostoiévsky; the critical writings of Bielínsky, Dobrolyúbov, and Píssarev; together with some scientific publications in French and English, as well as a number of unbound novels in various languages. On a large central table were scattered, among the latest illustrated papers, several numbers of the "Annals of the Fatherland." In the rear of the room stood a narrow brass bedstead, with its spotless white covers closed in by a dark-wood screen.

In the day time the girl did most of her work at a small side table, which she also used for meals, as these were brought in by the landlady. When visitors came, the centre table was cleared for the samovar. It was here that Tanya functioned as hostess on at least two or three nights of each week. She had some of her friends in the large building; others came from distant streets to take part in the "literary evenings" at the Five-Corners. A professor or two — Forsyth among them — were occasionally her guests. Much as these gatherings absorbed of her leisure time, they yet satisfied both the social and intellectual cravings

of her nature. Indeed, she shone in them beyond her wont, — so much so that when her party had gone, — when the sounds of declamation, of discussion, of song, and of earnest talk no longer filled her room, — the girl felt the reaction, and knew that a want in her existence had been supplied. At such times she would think of Sonya, and look forward to the moment when she and the banker's daughter could be together again.

It was on the morrow of one of these entertainments that Tanya, more than ever anxious about her friend, whose ill health had now become chronic, set out early for the Litéinia, and found the banker's family at breakfast. Though Sonya had just recovered from one of the slight colds to which she was peculiarly liable, it pained the visitor to notice how thin her features had grown. Being required by her medical attendant to avoid farinaceous food, the girl partook of nutriment specially prepared for her, and in the insatiable thirst resulting from her malady drank only what had been prescribed by the physician. To see her friend taking meals separately from the rest filled Tanya with foreboding ; but she felt relieved on hearing that Sonya, who hoped that the fresh, crisp air and the exercise of a walk would do her good, was to venture out on foot after breakfast. The girls were soon in the open air, and after leaving the Litéinia, found themselves strolling up the

Nevsky, in which Sonya had some small purchases to make.

As they approached the Kazán Cathedral, Tanya remarked to her companion that she never passed that spot without thinking of her mother. "Yes," she went on, noticing the sympathetic glance of her friend, "there is a picture of her in the cathedral, — an ikon painted by Ivánov, who took her as a model for his Saviour. Won't you go in with me, that I may show it to you?"

Sonya, eager to hear something of Tanya's relatives, gladly assented. The girls entered under the arched colonnade, and soon stood in the shadowy interior of the great edifice. One or two groups of visitors could be seen gazing at military trophies displayed on the walls; here and there, at the shrines of saints, lighted by thousands of candles, zealous worshipers knelt; meanwhile, the deep silence of the place was undisturbed, save by a just audible whispering that seemed to proceed from prayer. With the various "sights" of the cathedral the girls were already familiar, and Tanya at once drew her companion to an ikon of surpassing beauty. It depicted the Saviour in the temple, expounding the Scriptures to the high priests. The youthful Jesus, draped in a flowing white robe, with one arm raised, was pointing to a page of Holy Writ. The whole figure breathed inimitable grace and dignity. Yet it was the features which

riveted the attention of the beholder, for while the face had all the gentle sternness of the divine traits, it was also handsome with the human beauty of the ideal Son of Man.

After Sonya had gazed awhile at the picture, she turned to her friend, and more by manner than words besought her to continue the narrative of which, as she felt instinctively, the ikon was only the beginning. Tanya had been silent regarding her past solely out of motives of delicacy; now, feeling herself free to speak, she at once, on reaching the open air, began to confide to her companion the circumstances of her mother's early life. It was a sad story, the lesson of which might have been well summed up in that popular Russian proverb, "Be born, not beautiful, but lucky!"

The narrative, carrying Tanya two generations back in the history of her family, reminded the girl that her mother had no personal recollection of either of her parents. Of the father she knew nothing; all she had been able to learn of her mother was that the woman died soon after her confinement. The child, Tanya's mother, was saved to the world, and came in due time to be adopted by the Princess Bielsky, the owner of a large estate in the government of Tambov. Like most aristocratic households in Russia, this lady's family had long departed from the ancient traditions. Not only were her five daughters educated

in the European manner by Parisian and Swiss governesses, — the use of the Russian tongue at home was strictly forbidden; works printed in that language were rigidly excluded; even the prayer-books needed for family devotion had to be in French.

It was in this essentially Parisian atmosphere that Tanya's mother was brought up. She proved a bright and industrious pupil, and for a time, at least, enjoyed the favor of her foster parent. One little episode in her early life clearly brought out the goodwill of the princess. When the girl had reached her seventh birthday, the idea occurred to her of sewing a piece of needlework for the lady, and offering it to her as a gift. The work turned out well, and the princess, delighted with the mark of attention, gave the child in acknowledgment a gold thimble with the inscription, "To Masha. From the Princess Bielsky." This sentimental episode — at first in its probable consequences so promising for the young orphan — was destined to have a most painful reaction, for under the conditions of her life it was impossible for Masha to be beloved by her wealthy protector. The girl was growing up a beauty among plain faces, and the passage of years only served to accentuate the contrast between the infant given to the world with none of the world's advantages and the children born to fortune and hereditary rank. The mother

soon saw with mortification that the child over which in pity she had thrown the shelter of her roof was now to outshine her own offspring, not merely in attainments, — that she could have tolerated, — but also in good looks. For a time this feeling was subdued, yet it broke out later with all the force and heat of maternal jealousy.

At last came Masha's fatal year, — the year of her fifteenth birthday. The princess had taken the girls to St. Petersburg with her for the winter season; here it was that the painter Ivánov saw the beautiful orphan and obtained permission to paint her for his Christ. In the social entertainments that followed, — at parties, balls, concerts, and theatres, — Masha was everywhere sought after, petted, and fêted, until even the princesses grew resentful. The crisis soon came. The mother had sought an alliance for her eldest daughter with the Count Novitsky, but when everything seemed ready for the wedding, the count broke off the engagement, and boldly asked the hand of Masha. The princess tried to conceal her rage by pretending to be ill, the count receiving his reply by letter to the effect that the orphan was too young to be married. Swiftly the now roused mother returned to her estate. She saw the enemy within her own household. As long as Masha should remain under her roof, there could be no future for her daughters. Being a woman

of decision, she acted with promptitude. A few versts from her estate was an Agricultural School, presided over by one Lóbanov, a serious-minded, intelligent man, some forty-five years of age, whose father had been a serf in the Bielsky family, and whose education and position in life were largely due to their help. Knowing that she could count on his devotion, the princess sent for the director, and informed him of her desires. At the close of the conference, which was brief, she summoned Masha, and introduced Director Lóbanov as her future husband. As soon as the girl could fully comprehend the meaning of the command thus given, she gave way to a paroxysm of grief; yet in presence of the will that had been accustomed to dominate hers from childhood, the tears she shed and the protestations she made were alike unavailing. The princess, like a conscientious woman, wanting to do everything in order, furnished her with an elegant trousseau, and saw that in all other respects the girl was comfortably provided for.

A month later Masha assumed at the School of Agriculture her new position as the director's wife. In the domestic arrangements of that establishment, where some two hundred students were trained and boarded, she was not called upon to concern herself. So the girl wife had all the leisure that she needed, — perhaps more than was good for her.

Her wedded life proved lonely and painful in the extreme. A certain solicitous kindness on the part of her husband was not wanting, yet his sober character and over-serious views, together with his strong sense of duty and abhorrence of everything like sentimentality, unfitted him for the society of a young existence that above everything else craved sympathy and love. From his point of view, it was the duty of a wife to make a happy home: if she failed to do this, she must take the consequences of her failure. No wonder that Masha was left much to herself: there were times when she would have chosen loneliness, even if it had not been forced upon her. She soon grew accustomed to spend many hours of the day in the beautiful garden of the school, and there it was her habit to brood over her misfortunes. Only one companion was hers in these moments of introspection. Masha found consolation in the use of a diary, to the pages of which she confided many a sorrowful thought. Not caring to have the book at home with her, she kept it in the hollow of a tree that stood in a thickly grown spot at the end of the garden. One day, on repairing to the place, she found to her consternation that the diary had disappeared. A thorough search in the vicinity of the tree failed to reveal it. Her first thought was that it had fallen into the hands of her husband, and when dinner time came she hardly

dared look into his face for fear that she might there read her secret. But his calm, preoccupied air showed that he knew nothing of the book. Masha thereupon took a young servant girl into her confidence, and after a few days had been spent in investigation, learned that one of the students — a young man named Sóbolev — had found some kind of a volume in the garden. Masha, with rapidly beating heart, repaired to the stone stairway of the school, and waited there until, in response to a message, Sóbolev should appear with the diary. At last he came, and for a moment of painful embarrassment, the two with cheeks aflame stood facing each other, — he a student of eighteen, she a wife of sixteen. Masha asked him to return the book. With a profound bow, but without a word — without even a look, for the face was averted — he placed the diary in her hand and withdrew. This was the only “incident” she had experienced since her marriage. Soon children came to her, though of the three born, only the first survived. It was Tanya who first brought light into the dark household at the Agricultural School. All the mother’s pent-up feelings now found an outlet: on the growing girl she lavished a wealth of tenderness and love. The father died when Tanya was twelve years old, leaving an annuity to his wife and child. Soon after his decease, Masha, in the interest of her daughter,

took a position as teacher of French in the T—— gymnasium for girls, and two years later became principal of the same establishment. Yet she did not live long, and her decease left Tanya a minor under the guardianship of her husband's brother, who resided at Kazán.

Such was the story confided to Sonya; and when the girl reached home in the evening, she could think of nothing save the narrative of her friend. It was the first news about Tanya's relatives that had ever reached her. So with flushed cheeks and sparkling eyes she began to retell the story to the family seated at supper. The banker listened somewhat inattentively, with the air of a man who is attending to the salient points and letting the rest go; but when the name of the Princess Bielsky was spoken, he suddenly became interested.

“Did you say the Princess Bielsky?” he asked.

“Yes, father,” Sonya replied, “that was the name.”

“And what of her?”

“I was saying that Tanya's mother was adopted by the princess?”

“Adopted by the Princess Bielsky?”

“Yes, Papásha.”

“What? Tanya's mother?”

“Yes, father.”

“Are you quite sure?”

“Quite sure, Papáša.”

“Ah,” remarked the banker, with an effort at self-recovery, “my mind is out of sorts to-day. I must have had some other name than that in my head, and I was wondering how it could be.”

The old man had grown deathly pale, but he remained at supper, though he ate nothing. Sonya went on with her narrative. Miss Forsyth warmly sympathized with Tanya; even Constantine called her a brave girl.

Late in the evening the banker had his daughter repeat the story to him in the privacy of the reception-room. He had not paid much attention to it at supper, he explained, and wanted to hear it again. Long after Sonya had retired to rest, and while she yet lay awake with the excitement of the day, she could hear her father pacing to and fro in the long chamber overlooking the street. He sat down punctually to breakfast on the morrow, but he had not slept a wink.

When Constantine came in during the afternoon, he noticed a look of distress on the banker's face.

“You don't look well, father,” said he. “What is the matter?”

“Well enough, Costya, as far as my general health is concerned, but I feel rather depressed and anxious. I want, in fact, to have a talk with you.” The speaker motioned his son into the seat by his side.

"It must be Sonya, father, who is the cause of your anxiety."

A look of intense grief passed over the face of the banker. "You are right, Costya; I am deeply troubled about your sister. She is growing weaker and weaker. The doctor holds out no hope. Her life seems to be ebbing away imperceptibly. We must do something to restore her, — all we can to keep her with us." After a pause Líkhachov added, "And won't you help me, Costya?"

"Indeed I will," replied the lad eagerly. "Anything I can do for her or for you, I will cheerfully do, father. You have only to command me."

The banker seemed grateful for the warmth of the assurance, and went on: "You know Tanya Lobanóva, her friend?"

"I do."

"Well, it has struck me that if we could make Tanya a member of our family, her strong affection for Sonya might become a powerful means of restoring the girl to health. You have noticed yourself how greatly Sonya's spirits revive in the society of her friend; and as Tanya would be with her always, instead of occasionally, it might result in the saving of the child's life."

Constantine nodded assent, but did not see what his father was driving at. "How do you propose to do it?" he asked.

"There is only one way," replied the banker. "Tanya is a girl of superior parts. She is pretty, clever, well-educated; she would make an excellent wife." Here the old man turned abruptly to his son: "Costya, I want you to marry Tanya Lobanóva."

Constantine sat for a moment speechless, his mouth half open, his dilated eyes gazing fixedly into those of his father, but he quickly recovered from his astonishment, and burst into a loud laugh. "I marry Miss Lobanóva, father? I, an officer of the Guards, to wed a woman student? Upon my word! You cannot mean it! Ha! ha! ha!" and here the young man broke again into laughter. "Capital subject for an operetta. Ha! ha! ha! Well, well, father!"

But the youth's hilarity passed quickly away as he caught the look of misery and wretchedness which had crept into the banker's face; and when his second glance fell on the nervously agitated hands, the bent figure, the supplicating eye of his parent, the overflowing merriment in his heart turned to a feeling of pity and awe.

"No, father," he said soothingly, "you know that cannot be. You must give up the idea. It is too comical, for one thing. Then there is another reason, and a good one. I have a love affair of my own. In fact, my heart is already engaged."

"To whom?" asked the old man, in surprise.

Constantine blushed. "Well, father, I shall make a clean breast of it. I have a little French-woman in the Offitsérskaya."

"What of that?" asked Líkhachov, whose familiarity with the manners of the smart set did not help him to understand how a mistress could be any obstacle to marriage.

"Why, Papásha, I love that woman passionately. She is the one woman in the world that I care for. I would die for her, if necessary. She is young, pretty, brilliant, affectionate — everything that a man could desire." Constantine was on the point of adding, "You ought to see her, father," but he paused in time.

"Well," observed the banker dryly, "I always knew it to be fashionable for a man in your position to keep a mistress, but I never knew it was fashionable for him to fall in love with her."

The young guardsman flushed. He had been touched in a vulnerable spot. "I cannot help it, father. You may think it ridiculous, but — I cannot give her up. The passion is my master."

"But what if I were to command you?"

"Then I should disobey you, father," was the lover's gentle but firm reply.

The old man's despairing look wandered through the room until it rested on a picture of Christ praying in the garden of Gethsemane. Forgetting the son at his side, Líkhachov gazed long and in-

tently at the face of the anguish-stricken Saviour. "Must my cup of bitterness also be emptied to the dregs?" he muttered aloud. A moment more only he seemed to struggle. Then, in the spirit of a sudden resolve, he turned to his companion: "Constantine, listen; I have a confession to make to you."

Half an hour later, dazed, almost blinded, the young guardsman staggered forth into the Liténia with a secret in his breast and the consciousness at his heart that, come rain or come shine, the world could never be the same again for him.

CHAPTER V

FORESTALLED BY A THEATRE PARTY

THE day on which Tanya joined the "Pedagogical Courses for Women" in the Gorokhóvaya impressed itself deeply upon her memory. The change was in many ways a pleasant one. The irksome uniform of the gymnasium, with its brown dress and black apron, could now be set aside; the girl came at once into a richer educational atmosphere than she had ever breathed before. The newness of the experience was an exhilaration in itself. Nor could she look around the lecture-room at the earnest faces of over a hundred fellow pupils without feeling the helpful inspiration of numbers, and the still greater stimulus of companionship. And what a companionship! It filled her with thoughts of the greatness of her country; it spoke to her of the deep longing of her people for knowledge. She had hitherto thought of Russia in a vague sort of way, taking its enormous extent for granted; now she saw it pictured as in a living geographical map by the very faces of her fellow students.

Around her sat representatives of many of the

principal cities and "governments" of the empire. There were matter-of-fact young women of St. Petersburg, with the busy air and bustling manners born of city life ; then, slightly differentiated from the womanhood of the capital, the quieter, gentler-mannered girls from Moscow, with here and there an unconscious beauty of the old Russian type, perhaps from the very shadow of the Kreml, or from some fashionable dwelling on the Kuznetsky Most. Tanya saw vivacious, merry, but withal studious girls from Little-Russia, in whose sunny eyes the sky of the Ukraine seemed to be shining, and whose voices told of the gift of song ; and with these she could not help classing the light-haired daughters of Poland, doubly dowered with wrong and hate, but none the less sprightly, coquettish, and quick to learn. From the cities along the Volga had come, in their exceeding thirst for acquirements, the oval-faced Slavonians, with light eyes, fair tresses, and large physiques, destined by nature to be the hardy mothers of a strong and beautiful race. Many young women had also gathered, bright of eye and strong-limbed, from the forest regions of the north, from the wide-reaching and prolific "black earth," and from the territory of the Don Cossacks. The Crimea sent a few sun-burned visages to tell of its wine country ; a single Greek girl, with classic face, called Odessa her home. Here and there a pretty Jewess, or a dark-

eyed, black-browed Armenian sat. The south-eastern borderland of Asia was represented by a Tiflis girl, whose somewhat masculine demeanor suggested to Tanya the military society of the Caucasus ; while one modest maiden from Siberia, with her neat dress, earnest face, serious manners, and solidity of character, typified for the school the spirit of Russia's colonists in the Far East. The attire worn by the girls had a prevaillingly conventional appearance, though here and there one could see those outward signs of radical ideas, — the short-cut hair and the embroidered shirt belted at the waist. A few rich young women of the capital treated the courses as a pastime, — came as fashionable loiterers, to line the skirts of culture, as it were, with a fringe of "respectability ;" but the great mass of the pupils had entered the establishment to fit themselves for the professional work of teaching, and their earnest zeal did Tanya good. How the time had sped since her own entrance ! Already in the third and last year of her course, she had begun to mount to the pro-gymnasium in the third story for practice in the work of tuition. This indeed was her morning occupation ; in the afternoon she attended the lectures, sometimes as a "listener" on her own account, at other times to take notes in the interest of the class.

Here in the lecture-room, with its long rows of polished desks, ending in a platform, on which the

lectern stood, Tanya obtained her first fresh impressions of that higher knowledge to which Russian women were everywhere aspiring. True, it had reached her first through books, yet the personal influence of professional authority counted for not a little in the net result. For to the modest reading-desk which had grown so familiar to her, there came some of the brightest minds of Russia, — poets, *littérateurs*, historians, scientists, — each with the latest message of modern thought to earnest students eager to catch it up and pass it on to the new generation. Some of these professors left upon their work the stamp of a distinct individuality, and Tanya liked them all, — the lecturer on foreign and Slavonic literature, already famous as a translator of Shakespeare, a man of distinguished appearance, with high forehead, curved nose, thin lips, jet black hair, and quick, penetrating eyes, looking as she fancied Spinoza must have looked ; Professor N——, the frail, light-haired instructor in æsthetics, who talked with a quick, nervous eagerness which made it somewhat difficult to follow him, and whose love of English literature showed itself in the volume of Shelley which was his constant companion ; the professor of Russian history, S——, a sturdy, bushy-bearded, blue-eyed Little-Russian, whose sympathetic manners, brilliant style, and power of resurrecting the past endeared him to everybody ; then Professor

Zh——, the instructor in Greek art, for whose small stature, stooping shoulders, and nervously twitching face nature had atoned by a broad forehead, luxuriant curls, and a highly effective delivery; finally, Professor K——, the popular lecturer on psychology, logic, and pedagogics, a tall, large-boned Nóvgorodian, with a mastery of modern science, full of the dry humor of the Great-Russian, deliberate in utterance, an able popularizer of abstruse doctrines, inexhaustibly good-humored, and an untiring helper of the students alike in and out of school hours.

Under influences such as these Tanya had spent nearly three years at the Courses. It was an experience, even in its secular aspects, enlarging beyond anything she had dared to anticipate; yet it moved her more deeply than she could have been touched by any mere intellectual insight. It led her to question the bases of her religious faith. The struggle with old convictions had come upon her suddenly, as light floods a room when the shutters are thrown open; it was a struggle in which, as she had quickly felt, there could be no possible compromise. Nor was it merely because her religious beliefs had grown up and become deeply rooted in the emotional side of her nature. Like so many other young women in Russia, Tanya found she had to choose, not between a more liberal and a less liberal faith, but between a single

system of beliefs and none. For she had been brought up in a society quite devoid of those transitional religious forms which, in western lands, by making secessions from orthodoxy mere degrees in the scale of religious reconstruction, provide near neighbors alike for the most obstinate retreat into reactionary conservatism and the wildest flights of radical advance. On the one hand were the teachings of the Russo-Greek Church, with all their picturesque and emotional elements; on the other was the science of the higher education, with its appeal to the reason and hardly veiled scorn of the national faith. A painful wrench it cost her to make the inevitable choice; during the change, as it slowly worked itself out, she suffered from many a doubt, many a regret, many a heart-pang. Yet having once grasped the importance of the new knowledge, she did not hesitate. Trying as was the experience, it did her good; it made clear to her something which, in another realm, had long given her perplexity. For the conflict through which she had passed — the very distance at which she finally found herself from the old moorings — taught her how natural it was that in Russia reaction should take extreme, even revolutionary forms, and how the series of compromises out of which west European civilization had arisen was not possible among her own people. Meanwhile, in giving up the faith of her childhood, she

did not lose her respect for it. She never saw the gilded cupola of a church without recalling anew the charm of the old beliefs; nor could she behold a driver or a peasant cross himself in the street without feeling an instinctive impulse to imitate the action. Inconsistent with true Russian inconsistency, she even continued to wear the golden cross that had been clasped around her neck on the day of her baptism. For her the intellect had indeed conquered, yet in its generous breadth ample room was left for justice to the emotions.

Tanya enjoyed her new life to the full. Her relations with the faculty were of the pleasantest kind; she had many friends among her fellow students. One anxiety alone troubled her. This was the persistent attention paid to her by Constantine. For some weeks past the gallant guardsman had been in the habit of accosting her, at the head of the Gorokhóvaya, at least three times a week, in order that he might accompany her to the Courses. Sometimes he would meet her on the way home, and walk with her as far as her lodgings. It had soon become evident to the girl that he misunderstood the amiability with which, as the brother of her friend, she had endeavored to receive him; and the difficulty of indicating her real attitude, without needlessly hurting his feelings, had become her most perplexing dilemma. At first he had come with bonbons merely; then

he began to appear at the Five-Corners with costly bouquets from the florist's. The thought of these exotics made Tanya sad, the while that it nerved her with the courage to refuse them. "Constantine Serguéevich," she said one day, as the guardsman brought in a bunch of camelias, "I love flowers, it is true; but how can I accept bouquets that cost ten or twenty roubles a dozen, when I know that this sum might enable many a half-starved student to live for a month or more?"

The young man, visibly abashed by the reproof, purchased no more flowers; yet he continued to lavish gifts upon her until his persistence began to give her cause for serious reflection. If it was clear, on the one hand, that his attentions were not simply those of a brother or her friend: on the other, she was satisfied that Constantine could not regard her with the eye of a lover. He was affable, undoubtedly; he did his best to please her; as to being in love with her, — that was quite out of the question. Even a one-sided affection, totally unreciprocated, would have redeemed his behavior, little as it could have altered their relations; but a series of attentions not thus prompted could only be intolerable. That in the eyes of a man of the world she had nothing to recommend her — she well knew that to such a man her "advanced ideas" were little less than odious — was a consideration that increased the

tension of her feelings, until at last an indefinable fear began to pervade the atmosphere in which she received his visits. In the meantime her very friends instinctively perceived the strangeness of her relation to the young guardsman, so that she could not talk to him in the presence of others without feeling their embarrassment added to her own. What ought she to do? Ask Constantine to discontinue his attentions? That would be the heroic remedy. But how could she take such a step without seeming unkind to a member of the one family which, in the loneliness of her life at St. Petersburg, she had almost come to look upon as her own? Confide the whole matter to Sonya and ask her advice? Against this solution, by far the easier, womanly delicacy and the fear of adding to the anxieties of her sick friend inexorably arrayed themselves. Between these two ways out of the difficulty and her painful realization of the difficulty itself, the girl's mind oscillated.

One evening Tanya sat alone in her room. Constantine had not called on her for a week, and on that slight ground — so easily do we mould the future to our wishes — she had begun to hope for an early discontinuance of his visits. The girl was busy with some Italian exercises, one of the professors having inspired her with the desire to read Dante in the original. She had already taken up "*I Promessi Sposi*," and was threading her way

through Manzoni's simple narrative with the delight of that fresh and beautiful enthusiasm which seeks knowledge for its own sake. Her method, suggested by Forsyth, helped her to make substantial, even rapid progress. "The great thing," the Englishman had told her, "is to hold what you learn. Begin to read from the very beginning. Get your grammar as you go along." Tanya followed this advice to the letter. Having acquired the principal verb forms, she had begun reading exercises. Every unfamiliar word met with was entered, with its dictionary meaning, on a slip of paper, and when the end of the chapter had been reached, the new words were learned off by heart. In this way, with occasional dips into the grammar, Tanya found she could master a language in the time needed to go through her first book; she had already read more than fifty pages of "I Promessi Sposi." With what eagerness did she not look forward to the time when she could enjoy the Canto Primo of the Inferno! Already one of her bookshelves held an edition of Dante, and every now and then, opening the volume, the girl would seek out the first lines, as if to catch some foretaste of pleasures to come: —

Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita
Mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,
Chè la diritta via era smarrita.
Ah! quanto a dir qual era è cosa dura
Questa selva selvaggia ed aspra e forte,
Che nel pensier rinnova la paura!

This was as far as she dared venture, and though the meaning was not quite clear to her, she yet caught from the verse some echo of her own perplexities.

Ever and anon the girl would look up from her work through the window near which she sat to the other windows of the courtyard, where on each side of the great quadrangle, the lights of many lamps had been burning since early afternoon. Near these lamps she could see students busy like herself, and the sight set her to wondering. Who were the workers? What were their occupations and interests, what their aims and ambitions in life? Then she would pass from this mere childish curiosity to the thought of the deeper problems which the new knowledge had suggested to her, — problems of life and mind, of social welfare and individual destiny. At such times she would wonder how a single figure like her own, sitting solitary and apparently isolated from everything, could be of any import in the scheme of things; but when she remembered that the individual life has its meaning, not in itself alone, but in itself and in the whole of humanity, — that it is an essential part of that humanity, living with the life of the whole, contributing, in howsoever small a way, to that life, — her heart took great courage: straightway she felt herself bound by invisible links, not only to the toiling masses of the dark city around

her, but to the whole race, wherever the planet extended; and not only to the great living ones, from whose works she had drawn inspiration, but also to the mighty dead themselves, who in truth were still alive, alike in the immortal creations of their genius, and in the influence they had already exerted upon men. The evil in the world had indeed troubled her: sometimes she had wildly wished for the strong right arm of a Greek god that she might annihilate it with a blow. Yet in the next instant she had seen that a world wholly without evil would have no interest for aspiring souls. To her, in fact, life had already justified itself: already she recognized how the delight of learning and growing was to be multiplied a hundredfold whenever she could adequately extend her own bounty of knowledge and service to others. A snatch of music would even now set her heart and brain in a whirl of pleasurable excitement, and in that ecstatic moment, when all her interests seemed transfigured, even glorified, she caught glimpses of a future in which the most superstitious belief in a paradise for humankind would find its certain realization.

It was from musings such as these that Tanya was recalled by the loud ringing of the doorbell. A moment later she heard steps along the corridor, and before she had time to rise, a party of students burst into her room. There were some half

dozen of them, headed by two of her friends from the Courses, Varya Svyéshnikova and Olga Golushénko. Without waiting to offer formal greetings, Varya, a dainty little blonde, seized Tanya by the right hand, and holding up her own left, in which something lay concealed, cried, "Guess, Tatiána Vladímirovna, guess!" The young men gathered round to share in the fun.

"Now tell us quick!" urged Ilya Stepánich Lóginov, a robust, cheery-voiced medical student, pulling out his watch; "all depends on your promptitude."

Tanya looked round with an air of bewilderment.

"Oh, be fair; give her a pointer or two," protested Yevgény Andréevich Verévkin, the technologist, removing the spectacles from his ruddy, good-humored face; "you can't expect a young lady like Tatiána Vladímirovna to be up to all your tricks."

"Why," interposed Simon Petróvich Rúdnev, a tall, slim fellow, "it was nearly the ruin of Alexander Iliich. He went home at two o'clock in the morning with a frozen nose, and the house porter refused to let him through the gate, he was so changed. So he had to go to the officer at the corner. The policeman at once saw what was the matter, rubbed the poor fellow's nose with snow until his face had assumed its natural appearance,

then took him back to the gate of his lodging, where the porter recognized the young man and allowed him to pass."

Everybody laughed at Alexander Iliich, and Alexander Iliich laughed at himself. But as Tanya still looked mystified, Varya opened her left hand, disclosing the object of the visit. The students had made up a theatre party for that evening, and called on Tanya to make sure of her presence. The duty of purchasing a box ticket at the Mariinsky fell to Alexander Iliich Machekha, who had cheerfully spent the whole of a St. Petersburg winter night in the file at the ticket office in order to secure the coveted bit of cardboard.

As *droshkies* were in waiting, it took but a few minutes to reach the Mariinsky Theatre, where Melnikov was singing in "Russlan and Ludmila." In the box they were joined by other students, who included several young women from the Rozhdestvénsky Medical School and the Nikoláievsky Medical Courses. The young men surrendered the front seat to the girls, who at once became the subject of satirical comment, certain fashionable ladies pointing at them with opera glasses, as much as to say, "There, behold our *intelliguéntsia*!"¹ Tanya took little part in the talk of the students around her; she sat quietly but eagerly awaiting the opening of a performance in which the immor-

¹ Intelligent classes.

tal poem of Pushkin had been wedded to the exquisite music of Glinka.

Meanwhile she was soon to be recognized by one who had visited the theatre with no expectation of seeing any of his acquaintances there, — the schoolmaster himself. In his study of Russian life Forsyth had not neglected the play, and his attention to it had already been richly repaid. He had found first of all a highly developed taste for theatrical productions among a people whose intellectual progress had been seriously retarded by historical and sociological vicissitudes. He had been especially pleased to note the extent to which theatre audiences in Russia were made up of pupils from the various educational establishments, as well as to witness, in place of the coldly critical attitude peculiar to many western audiences, a depth of emotional interest, a fullness of enthusiasm, and withal an intellectual alertness to telling situations, which would have done credit to civilizations much more mature. As to theatre customs, properly so called, the style of the play had seemed to him French rather than Anglo-Saxon.

On this particular evening, Forsyth made his choice in favor of "Russlan and Ludmila" at the Mariinsky as against Italian opera at the Grand. Purchasing a balcony ticket, he passed into the theatre, and was soon absorbed in a study of the audience. The season was now drawing to a close,

yet the crowd which he saw was of genuinely "first-night" dimensions. Everywhere, moreover, he observed groups engaged in animated talk; everywhere the Russian trait of sociability seemed to manifest itself. By and by Forsyth was reminded of the lapse of time by hearing an expression of impatience in an adjacent box, evidently uttered by a foreigner; he then noticed that fifteen minutes had passed by since the hour fixed for the beginning of the opera. He wondered at the delay, and while speculating on its probable cause, was called upon to witness a scene of singular interest. It came without warning, so far as he was concerned. The audience rose suddenly; the curtain went up; the singers, massed in front of the platform, sang "God Save the Tsar!" (*Bozhe Tsare Khranye!*) Turning to his right, the school-master observed that the members of the royal family were entering the imperial box. Beneath heavy hangings of red and gold, he caught sight of a blaze of orders and decorations, a shimmer of silks and satins, even before the wearers came into view. Amid the fanfare of the orchestra and the acclamations of the audience, he saw tall figures bowing the acknowledgments of the royal party. Even while he gazed, the music suddenly ceased, and the curtain fell, to rise again a few moments later upon the opening scene of "Russlan and Ludmila."

Significantly enough, it was the music rather than the words of the opera which first impressed Forsyth. He had vaguely anticipated effects of the minor key, such as give so much of their character to eastern melody ; instead, he found himself listening to weird harmonies that seemed to reveal the race itself, — the very life experiences, the historical vicissitudes of the Russian people. For a while, therefore, the ethnological interest of the music held his attention. Yet presently, the dominant, the primæval significance of all music asserted itself, and Forsyth found that the appeal was being made to his heart, that his nature was being stirred to its very depths. Then, as the schoolmaster's eye ranged through the immense gathering, as if in search of something or some one, it suddenly caught sight of the figure of Tanya sitting far off from him, as it were, yet even there radiant with the beauty which had drawn him to her from the first moment of their acquaintance.

As for the spectators, they saw in progress an old Slavonic banquet, at which Grand Prince Vladímir, hero of the national epos, and “ beautiful sun of Kiev,” was celebrating the marriage of his daughter Ludmila. The period represented was that of the beginning of Christianity in Russia, though the roistering at Vladímir's table was still visibly pagan in character ; and when the orchestra accompanied it with an excellent imitation of

the din of knives and forks and the clatter of plates, the people applauded with gusto. The feast over, the blind harpist, Gusslar, sang a few strains, at once sweet and sad, that carried everybody back to the age of romance in Russian history; then the joyous Ludmila, with beaming face and fairy-like step, tripped across the stage towards her admirers, Ratmir and Farlaf, partly to console them, partly to justify herself, as she sang in notes which resembled the warblings of a bird:—

Slavny rytsar Ratmir
 Vinovata-li ya
 Chto moy mily Russlan,
 Vsyekh milei dlya menya? ¹

Just as Ludmila turned to her husband with, “Oh, my dear Russlan, how I love thee!” Tanya noticed the sudden opening of the opposite box on the tier lower than her own. The first to enter and take the front seat was a radiant young creature shimmering in pink silk and crimson roses. Her appearance caused a slight diversion, and for a few moments the newcomer’s delicately tinted face, luminous black eyes, dark lashes, and still darker eyebrows, with their setting of jet-black hair, whose silken curls fell in luxuriant profusion over the arched neck and finely moulded shoulders,

¹ Glorious knight Ratmir,
 Is the fault mine
 That my darling Russlan
 Is dearer than all for me?

diverted the eyes of not a few from the heroine on the stage. Tanya herself contemplated the girl for an instant, then became aware of a second figure standing behind her chair: it was that of a tall young officer in the uniform of the Guards. The student's heart leaped within her as she recognized Constantine. Now they were whispering together, and as the bewitching girl turned her face upward, the countenance of the guardsman filled with the radiance of a passion that could not be mistaken.

Tanya withdrew her gaze with a grateful sense of relief. Her heart had suddenly grown light. The reaction made her gay with the gayest, and she followed the rest of the performance with a buoyancy of spirits which the disappearance of Ludmila and the despair of Russlan were alike powerless to disturb. So that when the hero's wanderings at last ended in the union of the favored pair, the girl felt a burden rolled away: for hours afterward the musical refrain, —

O, Ludmila, Lël sulil nam schastyé
Serdse vyerit chto proidët nenastyé,¹

flitted through her brain with its message of joy and hope.

The moment now approached when Tanya's

¹ Oh, Ludmila, Lël (the Slavonic god of love) has promised us happiness. The heart believes the gloomy days will pass away.

acquaintance with Constantine was to terminate abruptly, for on the following morning she received a proposal of marriage from him, accompanied by the statement that he proposed to call the same evening for the reply, — a reply which he did not hesitate to anticipate would be a favorable one.

She was alone when he came, and though her heart was beating more quickly than usual, there was an expression of firmness in her face which boded ill for the plans of her visitor.

It was this look of determination which reminded Constantine, as he took the seat which she offered him, of the despicable part he was playing towards her. Inwardly he cursed the fate which had imposed it upon him ; yet, having plunged, he felt that he could not retreat. All he could do was to put as bold a front on the matter as was possible to him.

The expedient natural to a man in his position would have been to obscure the issue on which everything really turned. For this Tanya gave him no opportunity. With intuitive swiftness she called him immediately to account.

“Why, Constantine Serguéévich,” she asked, looking him full in the face, “do you wish me to marry you?”

His half-stammered reply was unintelligible to her, but she noticed that he had spoken with averted gaze.

"You are surely not joking?" she went on.

"Joking?" he retorted, summoning up courage to look at her, "I never was more serious in my life."

"Then am I to be angry with you?"

Constantine had planned his visit with the determination to brazen it out, come of his proposal what might. Though he had not feared a refusal, the girl's resistance began seriously to embarrass him. He suddenly remembered his flippant manner to her: perhaps that might present itself to her mind as an obstacle.

"You are cruel, Tatiána Vladímirovna," he began, "else you would not persist in doubting my word. At first it did not seem that I could ever care for you. That time is now past. I have come to feel that you are higher, better, nobler than any girl I ever knew. Perhaps that is why you reject my proposal. I am not worthy of you?"

A glimmer of the girl's superiority, suggested by the thought of the vile conspiracy in which he was engaged, had indeed suggested itself to Constantine. Meanwhile Tanya held unswervingly to her text.

"You speak of worthiness," she continued, "when there is not even sympathy to promote an understanding between us. Have you not shown that you regard my ideas and aspirations not only with distaste, but even with aversion?"

Here Constantine — in the conflict between conscience and self-interest — suddenly shifted the ground of his plea.

“Tatiána Vladímírovna,” he said, “do you wonder that I should want to marry you? Don’t you know how you revive everything you touch? — how everything brightens that comes within the sphere of your influence? Think of Sonya,” he continued. “Have you not observed that when you are away from her, she droops like a flower that is craving for the sunshine, — the sunshine of your presence, for in that alone does she seem to live again?”

Tanya looked at him inquiringly as he spoke. As she did so, a new thought, which had not before occurred to her, carried light into the girl’s busy brain: “He is doing it for Sonya’s sake.” Straightway, in place of the resentment which she had felt toward the proposals of a man already in love with another, there came a feeling of generous pity which she could not conceal, even from him.

Rising from her seat, and laying her hand lightly on his shoulder, she began: “Constantine Serguéévich, it is plain to me that you are acting from a mistaken motive. It is your exceeding sympathy with Sonya in her illness which prompts you. Indeed, you are willing to give up the dearest wishes of your heart if you can only mitigate the lot of your beloved sister. It is an act of

self-sacrifice that does you credit. All the same, it is one you have no right to make, and one which I, least of all, have any right to accept."

"Not so, Tatiána Vladímirovna," he hastened to reply, rising as he spoke, — his voice meanwhile sounding in his ears like a far-away whisper, — "it is because I love you that" —

Her eyes flashed him into silence before he could complete the sentence. "Constantine Serguéevich," she said, — her face suffused with a blush, — "you already love another, for I saw her with you last night in the Mariinsky Theatre. And now let me remind you, as evidently I must, that no duty is higher than faithfulness to one's own heart. Am I not right?"

For a moment he stood there, abashed, confused, trembling, — in the agony of his emotion at first unable to utter a word, — with the bravado all gone, the hues of a conflict, as it were, with death itself coming out on his face. Then, overwhelmed by the consciousness of guilt, stung to the quick by the lie direct which she had given him, not daring to meet again the proud, indignant look, never to be forgotten, which had fastened his baseness upon him as if he had been branded, he fell at her feet with the cry, wrung from the very depths of his overwrought soul, "Forgive me, forgive me!"

CHAPTER VI

A SURPRISE IN THE ASTRAKHÁNSKAYA

WHEN the pedestrian, after crossing the Neva by the Litéinia Bridge, enters the Výborgskaya Side of St. Petersburg, he comes suddenly upon the series of massive buildings which take their name and character from the chief of them, the Academy of Medicine. Here the architecture reminds him that, although he has left the city proper behind him, he is still in the capital. Yet when, turning to the left, he enters the Samsónyevsky Prospékt, penetrating to the adjacent quarter, with its three thoroughfares named after "governments" of the Volga, his surroundings at once lose their customary magnificence. In the seventies, at any rate, the whole of this region had a provincial appearance quite unworthy of the outskirts of a great cosmopolitan centre. The low buildings were largely of wood, alternated here and there with a structure of brick in a state of partial dilapidation. Private dwellings here touched sides with common lodging-houses: and here the small traders sold their wares, or the barbers received their customers, in diminutive shops that stood in unmistakable

need of renovation ; while, at almost every step, from other one-story buildings, now of wood, now of brick, the sign glared down upon the passer-by, *Raspívochno i na výnos*, an idiomatic expression which meant that the purchaser might either drink his liquor on the premises or carry it away for consumption elsewhere. An occasional garden, or plot cultivated to represent a garden, gave the streets their provincial aspect. Yet all of them were in bad sanitary condition. The pedestrian, moreover, had to pick his way past groups of dirty children, along pavements obstructed by the admiring audience of some street musician, through the throng of a market improvised in mid-thoroughfare, or in the wake of some drunken reveler fresh from the tavern.

Along the middle of the quarter ran the Astrakhánskaya Ulitsa, — a street occupied at its lower end with a few tall brick buildings, mostly used as lodging-houses, and entered through forbidding gateways leading into narrow courtyards. The lodgers were mainly poor business people who plied their trade in the quarter. A number of students had also gravitated to the street because of its nearness to the Academy ; and it was here also that Fiodótov lived. He was a medical student, like the rest. His rooms were reached by passing through the *porte cochère*, turning into a stone stairway dark and odorous in about equal

degree, and ascending as best one could to the seventh story. There, after the bell had been rung, the door would be opened and the visitor ushered into the kitchen. Then, having accustomed himself to the semi-darkness of the place, he would see an elderly woman, tall and large-boned, attired in a neat calico dress and checkered cotton apron, her smoothly plaited gray hair covered at the back with the *nakolka*, a kind of black silk headgear worn by married women. Her face, though puckered into many wrinkles, is lit up by a pair of faded blue eyes, and wears such an expression of kindness, sympathy, and resignation as cannot fail to prepossess the beholder in her favor.

This is Anícia Ivánovna, the mother of Fiodótov. She is washing clothes in the *karyto*, a long trough similar to that in which pigs are fed. As she works, with the patient look on her face, the squalling of a baby and the sounds of children's voices fall on the ear. They come from the room adjacent. It is small and poorly furnished. You see in it a table, a rickety bureau containing a few drawers, a rude bed with a quilt thrown over it, a trunk that has evidently been used as a bed, a broken-down sofa, and a child's crib. In the corner of the room hangs an ikon. Within the crib lies the squalling infant, a tiny, shriveled specimen of humanity with an abnormally large head. Two children are playing on the sofa, — Zákhar, a

robust-looking boy of five, and Natásha, two years younger, a fair-haired, pretty-featured girl. At the table, before a sewing-machine, sits Anna Petróna, the wife of the medical student, trying to earn money by making dresses. She must once have been beautiful, for she still has symmetrical features, lustrous dark eyes, and soft, jet black hair. Yet her good looks have been spoiled by disease and suffering; her vivacity of expression is gone; and if the features still retain any color, it is seen where two bright red spots burn angrily over the cheek bones. From time to time, as she sews, a proud, defiant look comes into the wasted countenance; the mouth compresses itself firmly, and the depressed brows give the eyelids a harsh, angular appearance. When painful thoughts trouble her, the dressmaker rests from her work a moment and smokes. On her table there is a package of tobacco, together with a number of square sheets of thin paper: she rolls her own cigarettes. This she finds cheaper than buying them.

What does Anna Petróna think about while she smokes? There is material enough in her history for abundance of reflection. Her mother-in-law, at work in the next room, was the wife of an under-officer, who died early, leaving to his widow the care of their only son, Serguéi. With the help of charitable people, Anícia Ivanóna succeeded in getting the lad educated at the gymnasium, where

he graduated at the head of the class. Then he entered the Academy of Medicine, and it was while pursuing his studies in that establishment that he fell in love with and married Anna Petrónna. She was an Arkhangel girl, slightly older than himself, and had been implicated more or less in revolutionary conspiracies. Several times she had fallen into the hands of the police, only to be liberated through lack of proof; though at last, as a precautionary measure, the authorities had confined her in the Fortress of Peter and Paul. Here Anna Petrónna lost health so rapidly that after a year's incarceration it was deemed safe to restore her to her husband. The girl was well educated, had spent several years of her life abroad, and spoke several languages, including English; but her "political untrustworthiness" had injured her chances of success in life, besides seriously complicating the position of her husband. With three children to provide for, the youngest of them crippled by hip disease, Fiodótov had found it difficult to procure even the most miserable subsistence for his family. It was, therefore, a fortunate day for him when, in the midst of his perplexities, the good mother to whom he already owed so much came forward with an offer of help. It needed little persuasion to induce Anna Petrónna to inspect the flat which had been hired in the Astrakhánskaya, and soon the old woman had the whole needy brood under her

wings. Some of the rooms were reserved for the family; the rest she underlet to students attending the Academy. The flat thus more than paid for itself: Anícia Ivánovna's washing brought in something; her daughter-in-law gained a small amount at the sewing-machine; Fiodótov earned an occasional fifty kopeks or a rouble by giving lessons, — so that, on the whole, there was income enough to provide for the barest needs of six persons. Whatever was lacking in luxuries, Anícia Ivánovna supplied in cheerful service and unfailing good humor. To the students she was an ideal landlady. She would bring them the samovar or run on their errands at almost any hour of day or night; upon their evening parties she never failed to look in with beaming face and placid smile; and though the old woman liked it to be known that she was an *unteroffitsérscha*, which was something higher than a peasant's wife, nothing pleased her so much as to be called by her lodgers "Old Student."

It was still spring in the Astrakhánskaya, yet a May day had come which seemed enviously to withhold spring's genial influence and bounty. Outside, a light, drizzling rain was falling; within, in rooms darkened beyond their wont, the Fiodótov family were awaiting the near advent of dinner time. The baby had just fallen asleep; the children were playing with the *débris* of a doll which their grandmother had picked up in the courtyard.

The sewing-machine worked spasmodically; there were sounds of splashing in the adjacent room.

"Will dinner be ready soon, mother?" asked Anna Petrónna.

"In a moment or two," answered the old woman, as with sleeves rolled up she entered the sitting-room, wiping her wet hands on her apron. Then, after petting little Zákhar awhile, Anícia Ivánovna inquired, "Will Serguéi be home early?"

"No," was the reply. "Somebody promised him a lesson at Vassíly Ostrov. He will go there after his work at the hospital, and won't be back till late."

"He'll be worn out, poor boy." Then the old woman passed into the kitchen, to return in a few minutes with the midday meal which the Fiodótov family called dinner. It consisted of black bread and *ryedka*, a kind of turnip-radish sliced up raw, and mixed with linseed oil. The four being seated at table, portions of the *ryedka* were served out by Anna Petrónna to each. For the baby the old woman moistened some crumbs of bread in a cup of warm water sweetened with sugar.

The children were in a cheerful mood, despite the excessive modesty of their meal. They seemed to be expecting something or somebody. At any rate, they whispered together mysteriously. Finally, when the *ryedka* had all disappeared, Zákhar asked, —

“Mamma, when is she coming?”

“This is her day, Zakhárushka,” said Anna Petróvna. “Wait patiently and be good children.”

“Won’t she forget?” whispered Natásha, fearfully.

“Forget?” muttered the old woman. “The good creature never forgets. There, now, go and play,” she added, removing the plates, as Anna Petróvna again took her place at the sewing-machine.

An hour later, Tanya Lobanóva, her arms full of parcels, was making her way up the dark stairway that led to the lodging of the Fiodótovs. She had heard of their distress some two months before from a fellow student at the Courses, and had found an intense pleasure in calling regularly upon the family. The girl could have brought aid of a more substantial character, but the inviolable pride of the family made this impossible. The Fiodótovs would accept little acts of kindness from a student, — “one of themselves,” as they were accustomed to say, — but not a kopek from people whose charity would entitle them to be regarded as benefactors. So once a week Tanya brought them packages of bread, sausages, cheese; some delicacies for the baby; nourishing preparations for Anna Petróvna; a special present of some kind for the old woman; now and then a pair of boots or an article of clothing for the children.

When Anícia Ivánovna opened the door to the visitor, a gleam of sunshine entered the dark rooms of the Fiodótov household. It shone in the smiling face of the old woman ; it filled the features of Anna Petrónvna with cheerfulness and good humor ; in the delighted eyes of the children it fairly danced.

"Well, *golúbushka*¹ Anícia Ivánovna," said Tanya, having deposited her parcels on the table, removed her outer clothing, and taken a seat, "and how is the little one?"

"Just ailing, as usual, — neither better nor worse."

"And you, Anna Petrónvna?"

"Ah, Tanya," replied the student's wife, "if you only knew how impossible some people are! Just think of it! The other day I called on the doctor, and what did he tell me? You would never guess! That I was to eat plenty of roast beef, consume as many grapes as I could get, and drink wine daily! How I smiled! Not that he noticed it, for he went on giving me good advice. Ah, these doctors!" she added, with a deprecatory shake of the head.

"Serguéi would n't have made that mistake, I warrant you!" interjected the old woman.

"Indeed he would n't," said Anna Petrónvna ; and the grim joke set all three women laughing.

¹ An endearing expression equivalent to "dear little dove."

A few minutes later, Anícia Ivánovna brought in the samovar and served tea. During the conversation that followed, Tanya confided to her friends some of the plans she had formed for the future. In view of the completion of her studies at the Courses, for she had already graduated, two positions had been offered to her, — one as the directress of the Orel Gymnasium, the other as teacher of a three-class peasant school at Nóvgorod. The first had superior advantages, both of salary and social position, but Tanya preferred the opportunity which the second gave her of coming into contact with the peasants, and had elected to accept it.

“Nóvgorod?” mused Anna Petróvna aloud. “That’s where Pótapov’s relatives live. Do you know Pótapov, medical student?”

Tanya did not.

“He left me some papers this morning. I had almost forgotten them. He is to call for them to-night.” Here Anna Petróvna took from a drawer some printed sheets, glanced at them for a moment, then handed them to Tanya, adding, “I have n’t had time to read them yet.”

Tanya looked at the papers with some curiosity. She knew Anna Petróvna’s fondness for revolutionary literature, and had herself seen publications of the kind in circulation among the students. The sheets handed to her proved to be copies of

“Vperëd!” (Forward!), issued at Zürich, Switzerland. She had just opened one of them when the doorbell rang.

The old woman rose to answer the summons. “Stop!” ejaculated Anna Petrónna, in a voice of strange intensity, though it rose scarcely above a whisper. Tanya looked up and observed the young woman standing in an attitude of attention, with her right arm raised towards her mother-in-law. The next instant the papers were snatched from her hand; she saw Anna Petrónna gaze round the room, thrust the dangerous publications, with a quick movement, under the sick child in the crib, and then resume her seat. The bell was again rung, this time violently.

“Now go, mother,” said Anna Petrónna, lighting a cigarette. “It’s not every visitor you can trust,” she added, turning to Tanya.

Anícia Ivánovna hurried to the kitchen. Soon a voice was heard asking for the rooms of the student Fiodótov. The next moment, guided by the *dvornik*, — a red-haired, evil-visaged fellow, — the local *prístav*¹ entered, followed by two of his aides and several police sergeants.

The *prístav* was a tall, well-proportioned man, of rather handsome appearance and imposing manners. He came in glittering military uniform, and was spotlessly clean, from the glossy white cuffs of

¹ Chief of police in charge of the quarter of a city.

his shirt-sleeves to the curled tips of his dainty waxed mustache. Nothing quite so gorgeous had ever before been seen in the wretched surroundings of the Fiodótov household.

The trembling old woman had followed him in, and now stood, with a look of mingled distress and apprehension on her face, watching the movements of the officers. Anna Petróvna remained seated, playing nervously with the ash at the end of her cigarette. The children had drawn near their mother, and were surveying the intruders with innocent, childish curiosity.

The *prístav* laid a few sheets of paper on the table and gave some directions to his assistants. Then began a close search of the rooms. Every nook and corner was explored by the chief himself. The drawers of the bureau were opened and ransacked; the contents of the trunk were turned over, article by article; the bed-quilt was lifted and the boards underneath it removed. When a letter or a scrap of printed paper was found, the *prístav* handed it to one of his aides; when the find was a book, he carefully searched its pages for hidden correspondence. Finally, the kitchen was visited, and there, when everything else had been overhauled, the delicate-handed officer examined piece after piece of Anícia Ivánovna's dirty washing.

Thus far nothing of a compromising nature had

been discovered. Yet the *prístav* did not give up hope. He came back and glanced critically round the room. At last his eye fell on the crib with the sleeping baby in it. Stooping quickly, he seized the child and held it aloft, while one of his assistants drew forth the concealed sheets. "A clever trick, indeed," he ejaculated. Meanwhile the little cripple screamed with pain, its large head hanging helplessly on its chest, its shriveled limbs dangling in the air.

Anna Petrónna started forward with a cry of horror. Tanya was already on her feet. She had thus far watched the scene in silent astonishment; now the brutality of the officer aroused her indignation. It was only the work of a moment to spring to the side of the *prístav* and recover the infant from his grasp. Then with flashing eye and quivering lip she turned to him: —

"How dare you, sir, abuse this sick child? Do you not know that even these poor people have rights which you cannot violate with impunity? Have a care what you do! There is justice even in Russia; and the day of reprisal for you and yours may be nearer than you think."

The *prístav* heard these words and watched Tanya return the infant to its crib without moving a muscle. He simply glanced over the papers for an instant, and then asked Anna Petrónna, —

"Where did you get them?"

“I decline to tell.”

“I claim them,” broke in Tanya, adding in English, with a swift glance at her companion, “do not contradict me.”

Anna Petrónna, in the same language, at once replied, “Tatiána Vladímirovna! For heaven’s sake do not take the responsibility upon yourself. It will ruin you, and do us no good.”

For a moment Tanya felt her resolution shaken. She thought of the future, now opening for her so brightly, — of Sonya, of her friends at the Courses, of her studies. Yet the cries of the cripple still rang in her ears; and as her gaze fell on the pinched features of Anna Petrónna, then on the woebegone face of the old woman, she said again in a clear voice: —

“I claim the papers; they are mine.”

“Pay no attention to the young lady,” interposed Anna Petrónna. “The papers are mine. I alone am responsible.”

“Then,” observed the *prístav*, looking from one of the women to the other, “I arrest you both in the name of the law.”

Tears now started from the eyes of the old woman; placing herself in front of the *prístav*, she began to wring her hands. “Oh, please your honor; oh, your honor! oh dear me, your honor!” she pleaded. “These papers are nothing. They won’t harm anybody. Oh, please your honor,

don't do anything to us! We are poor people. What will become of us? Here is our baby, — what — who is to care for it? There are Zakhár and Natásha, who is to work for them? What will Serguéi say when he comes home? And this good young lady — she has done nothing — nothing? Oh, your honor, — *please*, your honor!"

"Pshaw, mother!" interrupted Anna Petróvna, with an impatient gesture, "what are you saying? Let them do their dirty work. I know them, the *arkharóvtsy*." ¹ The speaker's face had grown deathly pale.

The children, comprehending by this time that some danger menaced them, began to cry bitterly. Natásha had thrown an arm round her mother's waist. Zakhár clung to the old woman's dress.

The officers having by this time returned from their search of the other rooms, a protocol was drawn up by the *prístav* to the effect that in the apartments of the students Perebyólkin, Sobryakóv, and Ivolgin nothing compromising had been found.

Then the police prepared to leave with their prisoners. Anna Petróvna accepted her misfortune with a defiant look. Hers was a face so hardened by misery and injustice that it seemed to have become incapable of even a tear. Yet it softened for a moment as the woman bent down to

¹ Mob, canaille.

kiss her crying children, — first her baby in the crib, then Zakhár and Natásha, — and to assure them that she would be back soon, and that they must be good till her return. Why, indeed, should she weep? It was not a new experience for her: she had been separated from her babies before. It was one of the incidents of her life. She had grown accustomed to it.

At the bottom of the gloomy stairway, Tanya took off her jacket and threw it over Anna Petróvna's shoulders. Then the march to the local police station began. Before twenty steps had been taken, Anícia Ivánovna came running after them through the rain. She had brought her best shawl for Tanya. . . . Just before turning the corner of the Samsónyevsky Prospékt, the prisoners looked back and saw the old woman watching them from the gate.

CHAPTER VII

FORSYTH GOES IN SEARCH OF TANYA

SINCE his visit to the banker's *dacha*, the school-master had spent a week at the country house of his friend General Windt, besides making sundry country excursions to acquaintances formed at the Lyceum. His life in lodgings at the Nývaya Ulitsa was a combination of work and recreation. Breakfasting at home, he was in the plebeian habit, for practice in the language, of going to the shops for his own provisions. Between eight and nine o'clock, the servant having brought in the samovar, he would make his own tea and partake of a light breakfast. His sole companion at this first meal of the day was the morning paper. He usually read the "Golos," but when that journal was unattainable, — owing to the censor having prohibited its sale in the streets, — he contented himself with the conservative "Nóvoe Vrémya," the daily supply of which was never interfered with by the authorities. Breakfast over, he would sally forth, stroll up the Nevsky, and look into Dominique's Restaurant for a glimpse at the foreign papers. The remainder of the day would be passed

in visits to places of interest, dinner being taken *en route*, to the fostering of the schoolmaster's growing knowledge of the Russian *cuisine*, that realm of fatty surprises, of acid wonders, and mysterious fluidities, into which no foreigner ever becomes thoroughly initiated. The afternoon, when no particular engagements called him, he would devote to exploring the city, now traversed by flowing canals, or to making short trips to places of interest along the Neva. His evenings were usually passed at his lodgings in study, but this indoor occupation would be occasionally relieved by calls on friends. Most of his leisure nights he spent at the banker's. On rare occasions he would sit in the Summer Garden to smoke a cigar at his ease, and look on at the current of life as it surged past, — that stream of pensive figures whose impassive surface seemed only now and then broken by a ripple of gayety; through the trees he could see the lights of the garden theatres, and hear the music of the military bands. Often he had walked home when the great dim northern night had wheeled past its zenith point, and the lights of a new day were already burning in the sky.

The schoolmaster was sitting at breakfast one morning in June with the steaming samovar before him, when the servant entered with a letter. The address was in his sister's handwriting. He tore open the envelope, and read a request for

his immediate presence in the Litéinia "on a matter of great urgency." Without waiting to finish his breakfast, for he had never known his sister to write in that way before, Forsyth called a *droshky*. On reaching the house in the Litéinia, he found the banker, the nurse, and Miss Forsyth together, Sonya being confined to bed with a cold. It took but a moment or two to tell the schoolmaster why he had been summoned. The family were anxious about Tanya: the girl was not to be found, — she had in fact disappeared. Inquiries had first reached them from her landlady at the Five-Corners; then a messenger, sent to the Courses, had brought no information as to her whereabouts. After a family consultation, the banker decided to call in Forsyth and intrust him with the task of making an investigation. All the facts of the disappearance, as well as everything known regarding Tanya's habits, were now freely discussed. Once or twice the banker asked, with a meaning inflection, about the girl's companions, and shook his head doubtfully when assured that there was no reason to think her "compromised" in her acquaintances. This was a point which Sonya could have cleared up, but owing to her poor state of health, the matter had thus far been concealed from her.

From the family council in the Litéinia Forsyth drove to the Five-Corners, and having obtained

from Tanya's landlady all the information she could give, proceeded without delay to the police station of the quarter. The idea that the girl might have fainted in the street and fallen somewhere into the hands of friendly strangers — a thought quite masculine in its character — had more than once flashed through his mind. While he did not care to brood over the possibility of anything more serious, he felt he could not do better than put himself in communication with the police. In England it was certainly their function to make inquiries regarding missing persons, and it might be so even in a Russian city. This conclusion, though not strictly deducible from his general ideas about Russian affairs, turned out to be substantially correct. The officer in charge of the station took down the schoolmaster's name, address, and occupation ; then asked about the girl. Her name ? Where did she live ? How old ? The date of her disappearance ? Who were her relatives ? The questions came higglety-pigglety, without much regard to order, and Forsyth answered them to the best of his ability, adding a statement of the circumstances under which Tanya had been missed. A question was finally asked regarding the girl's calling, and on the schoolmaster replying that she was a student, qualifying herself for a position as teacher, the official smiled significantly, as if some new light had been shed on the case.

"Well," he remarked, "we have n't heard anything of this particular young lady, but you may go to the chief of police."

"What good will that do?" Forsyth asked.

"Don't you see? The girl's a student. She may be a 'political.' We have nothing to do with that kind of cases."

Forsyth got into his *droshky* with the perplexities that had troubled him increased a hundred-fold. The possibility that Tanya could belong to a revolutionary society and fall into the hands of the police had never before occurred to him. It filled his mind with fears whose very vagueness added to their power over his imagination. All he could do was to hope for the best, to trust that Tanya had not been so incautious, to believe that somehow or other the girl —

Suddenly a voice aroused him from these reveries. It was that of his driver. In his perplexity the schoolmaster had forgotten to direct the man anew. Whither should he go? In truth, he hardly knew himself. To the chief of police? The errand itself might prove compromising. Perhaps that official would tell him nothing: as a foreigner, unfamiliar with Russian ways, the interview would put him at a decided disadvantage. All at once he thought of General Windt, and the driver was instructed to drive to No. — in the Bolsháya Podyácheskaya. He had the good fortune to find his friend at home.

General Windt, with a thoughtful expression on his face, listened patiently to the end. Having asked a few questions, he finally began pacing the room with downcast eyes. Several minutes passed without the utterance of a word. Then, stopping in his walk, the general drew a chair near to Forsyth's, offered his visitor a cigar, lit one himself, and after taking a few puffs, said: "This case puzzles me a little. Of course, people are constantly disappearing in a great city, never to be heard of again. It is not necessary to assume that they have been murdered, or have committed suicide by drowning; often they go away voluntarily, for a variety of reasons. Now, in this case," the speaker went on, "you may fairly assume that there has been no accident. What else is there to explain the disappearance? Unless the girl is compromised with the authorities, we have absolutely nothing to work on. Without that clue, we are in the dark. True, her friends have seen nothing in her conduct or associates to justify the conclusion that she is a 'political.' Do they know all that is necessary to negative that conclusion?"

Forsyth admitted that he could say little at first-hand. He had met the girl only occasionally, yet in extended conversations he had never heard her say anything that could be construed into an avowal even of her sympathy with secret societies,

much less of her connection with them. The parties he had joined at her "literary evenings" in the Five-Corners certainly gave no support to such a view. The superiority of the girl's manners and her general elevation of thought were enough, in his view, to show that she would be very careful in her choice of associates; on the other hand, he found it natural to presume that, like most other students, she had liberal sympathies, and did not always consider it necessary to conceal them. Would that compromise her?

"Not of itself," replied the general, though it might bring her into the society of people already compromised."

"You think, do you, that she may have fallen into the hands of the authorities?"

"The probabilities are certainly in favor of that conclusion."

"Then such disappearances are not unusual?"

"The sudden disappearance of a student," General Windt went on, "is an event by no means uncommon in these days. Our colleges and universities are now passing through a period of considerable difficulty: on the one hand, the rectors and principals are sometimes at fault; on the other, the young people do not always act as wisely as they might. I confess I was never over-fond of our police methods: since my travels in western Europe I have liked them still less. Yet now and then the

authorities find it necessary to adopt severe measures ; and the decision, as you know, rests wholly with them."

Forsyth, who had smoked his cigar nearly to the end, was gazing moodily down at the carpet between him and the speaker. "What, then, do you advise?" he finally asked.

The general, having sat awhile longer, took his place at a desk, drew out note-paper, and began to write. In a few moments the letter was ready.

"Here is an introduction," said he, "to General Trédiakov, of the political police. Our ordinary police, as you are probably aware, have no jurisdiction over such cases as I am supposing this to be. Trédiakov is a personal friend of mine, — we were at Berlin together, by the way — and if anybody can help you, he can. But don't expect too much. We are governed here, you know, not by individuals, but by a system. The individual is nothing, the system everything. So don't take it to heart if Trédiakov is a little curt with you. He'll give you everything he can for my sake, but he won't waste many words, and you will not get many long answers to disagreeable questions." As the general said this, his eyes twinkled.

Forsyth understood, took the letter, and gratefully shaking his friend's hand, returned to the *droschky*.

A quarter of an hour after leaving General

Windt, the schoolmaster entered a gloomy-looking official building on the Gorokhóvaya and presented his note of introduction. The usher led Forsyth through several corridors to a large, well-lighted room facing the street. A full-length picture of Alexander II. leaned from one of the walls ; on another was stretched a large map of St. Petersburg. At a table near the window an official sat writing. He was a man of slim build, rather small of stature, with a round, bullet-like head, and short, bristly, black hair. His chin was clean-shaven, but round the upper lip ran a mustache, every hair of which seemed to point outwards. The face, which was nearly as round as the head, presented a somewhat swollen appearance, and there were dark patches on it where the razor had been. Every now and then the official would look up, fix his gaze on the picture of the Emperor, allow it to rest there for a moment or two, then resume his writing.

“Is this Trédiakov?” the schoolmaster mentally asked himself. He stood a few moments, waiting to be addressed. Meanwhile nothing was audible save the scratching of a pen : the man at the desk took no more notice of him than if he had been a statue. The visitor advanced a few steps, and paused once more. There was still no reply. Finding his patience evaporating, Forsyth began : “If you will excuse me, sir ” —

Immediately the bullet-like head turned half round, and the schoolmaster heard a dry, semi-nasal voice speaking to him.

"Who are you, sir? What is your business? Who sent you here?"

"I came with a letter from General Windt."

"Oh, you are General Windt's friend, are you? Or he is yours?"

"Something of both," dryly replied the Englishman.

"And you want?"

Forsyth told his story in its briefest outlines. At the end he asked the official for information.

"A girl student, eh? What did you say her name was?"

"Tatiana Vladimirovna Lobanova."

"Troublesome people these!" remarked the official, as, having written the name on a slip of paper, he touched a button. "Find out," he said to the messenger, "whether Borsky knows anything of this case, and if he does, tell him to send for me."

Trédiakov began writing again. Every minute or two he would look up at the picture of the Emperor, and down again at his papers. Five minutes later, the messenger returned, but without the desired information. After a brief conversation, the two men went away together. It was half an hour before Trédiakov again resumed his seat.

"A bad case!" he began. "Associating with revolutionists of the most dangerous type; found in possession of revolutionary publications; resisting the police in the discharge of their duty; using violent and threatening language towards the constituted authorities. At present in a prison of preliminary detention; to be shortly banished; destination not yet fixed."

Forsyth heard the first part of this official excerpt with a feeling of consternation. His friend's surmise had proved only too correct.

"Where was she arrested?"

"At No. 32, in the Astrakhánskaya, May 29."

The schoolmaster made a note of the reply.

"And when will she be tried?"

Trédiakov looked round in surprise. "Tried? We do not try cases like these. Trouble enough for us to arrest and punish them!"

The schoolmaster felt his anger rising. Yet he did not care to bandy words with a system: he knew, moreover, that a verbal encounter with Trédiakov would imperil the object of his mission. So, as there was nothing more to be learned, he thanked the official and withdrew. It was while passing from the room that he once more heard, as in a dream, the dry voice of Trédiakov saying, by way of adieu, "Tell General Windt that I give him the information out of personal friendship only. The political police never explain themselves."

Forsyth drove at once to No. 32 in the Astrakhánskaya, and learned the story of the arrest from Anícia Ivánovna; then, with his head in a whirl, his heart meanwhile swelling with sorrow and indignation, he put himself in communication with the banker and with General Windt. The same afternoon a conference of the friends was held in the Litéinia; and the general, though without much hope of success, undertook to lay before some highly placed personages of his acquaintance the facts as they had been learned by the school-master. Windt spent the whole of the following day in an effort to rescue the girl from the false position into which nothing worse, as it clearly seemed to him, than her own incautious generosity had brought her; yet he had to return in the evening with the admission that, for the most part, his efforts had proved futile. It was in vain that he had urged the complete innocence of her connection with the Fiodótov family. As she had acknowledged the revolutionary publications to be hers, the police had nothing to do with the contentions of the two women as to which of them should assume the responsibility. Moreover, the girl had interfered with the officials during their search, — though what the interference consisted of they refused to state, — while her angry speech to the police official was enough to show that she belonged to the “illegal” classes. One thing only had been

allowed to tell in her favor—the fact that this was her first offense; and so, instead of being banished to a northern province, as had originally been intended, she was to be sent to the milder regions of the Volga, probably to some city in the “government” of Astrakhan. Where the girl then was, General Windt found it impossible to learn; nor would there be any means of communicating with her until after she had reached her destination.

Weeks of anxious waiting followed the separation of the friends. Just as the general was on the point of renewing his inquiries, a letter reached Miss Forsyth in Tanya’s handwriting. It had been written in the town of E——, on the lower Volga, and proved to be little more than a brief introduction to a second and longer communication which the envelope contained for Sonya. The writer mentioned the circumstances of her arrest, the date of her removal from St. Petersburg, and the complete indefiniteness of her period of exile. She had fully realized the feelings of her friends, but had not been permitted to inform them before, and had been all along trusting that some lucky accident would reveal to them the true nature of her misfortune. She had not written directly to Sonya because of uncertainty regarding her state of health; yet should the sick girl be well enough to bear so much excitement, the writer

depended upon Miss Forsyth to give her the letter inclosed.

Thus far, Sonya had been kept in ignorance of the true state of affairs. It had been possible to account in various ways for Tanya's absence. As this was now becoming a source of anxiety to the patient, her friends deemed it best to make a disclosure of the facts. The news gave a painful shock to Sonya's delicate organism, but the long letter from Tanya, with its reassuring calmness, courage, even hopefulness of tone, went far to restore the banker's daughter to her normal composure. Tanya had nothing with which to reproach herself; her absence could not be for long; while the friends, though separated, would at least have the priceless consolation of being able to write to each other. Two months later, Forsyth was intrusted by the banker with a mission to the city of E——. It was the result of a conference, lasting several hours, in which he and Líkhachov had considered what could be done for the girl, — on the one hand, without any appearance of undue intrusion into her affairs; on the other, without any interference with the requirements of the local authorities. The men well knew that, as an administrative exile, Tanya would be held to account for her behavior, and might also be kept under a more or less strict surveillance. It was nevertheless believed that ways might be found of mitigat-

ing her lot beyond the power or even the wish of the police to take cognizance of; and so the task of discovering or devising these was, at the suggestion of Sonya, intrusted to the only man of Líkha-chov's acquaintance on whose solidity of character and discretion the banker felt he could rely.

The schoolmaster set out on his journey one morning early in the month of October. A peculiar odor in the atmosphere warned him of the Russian winter, already at hand; yet the cold season was several weeks distant, and he could easily count on reaching the lower Volga before the close of navigation. The Nikoláievsky Railway-station, when he reached it, was crowded and picturesque beyond its wont; though for the present Forsyth's heart and head were alike abstracted from the objective world around him. If he purchased his ticket, questioned officials regarding times of departure and arrival, and finally took his seat in the train, he did all this with the air of a man in a dream, and with movements that might easily have suggested the instinctive perambulations of a somnambulist. Nor did the luxurious rest and quiet of a first-class carriage at once restore for him to their normal regularity those mental processes which the events of the past few days had so woefully confused. With a mechanical stare he watched the passing of the people before his window until they might as well have been

moving on the pane itself ; he listened to the ringing of the bell until it seemed to be sounding, not some distance away, but in his ear. Little wonder that as the train moved out of the station, it carried one passenger who had fallen asleep. The schoolmaster's tired organism sought relief in insensibility. Since the news of Tanya's disappearance the man had worked like a Trojan ; the fatigues and excitement of the day having deprived him of rest at night, his nervous system was still a sufferer from the abnormal demands thus made upon it. It was therefore well that he now slept soundly and long. How long he knew not, but he remembered being suddenly awakened by the stoppage of the train and the slamming of the door of his carriage. The conductor was calling, " Chudovo : train stops here half an hour." Forsyth rubbed his eyes. The slight headache from which he had suffered in the morning had disappeared ; the heaviness of his faculties was gone ; he felt an unusual lightness, an unexpected vigor. Were these simply the natural reaction of an organism released into new circumstances, or did the relief come from the whispering of his heart that told him of a hope that, so lately and painfully assailed, had been so suddenly and unexpectedly renewed ? He could not decide : he knew only that he was traveling to E——, and that he would see Tanya. Was not that enough ?

Springing to his feet, and leaving his luggage in care of a porter, Forsyth sauntered into the dining-hall of the railway-station. This being the first time in his Russian experiences that he had been far away from the capital, the aspect of the dining-hall, with its numerous waiters in white, the multiplicity of its tables, and the plenitude of its glassware, appealed to him with an agreeable sense of novelty; and when, the meal over, he sat awhile sipping tea, he realized the sense of that complete newness of his surroundings, that perfect freedom of movement in them, and that vague anticipation of like pleasures of unlike kinds still to come, which make up more than half the delight of travel. His spirits were so far restored that he even began to speculate upon the probable origin of the name "Chudovo." Did it come from the word *chudo*, "marvel," "mysterious"? or was it a memorial of those Finnish people, the Chuds, with whom his historical studies had brought him in contact?

With thoughts like these his mind did not long busy itself. The only topic in which the schoolmaster could now be seriously interested was Tanya and the town of E——. These were uppermost in his mind when the train again started, and he thought of them all along the rest of the road to Moscow. Yet his musings did not bring him an altogether unmixed pleasure. Not that his conscience reproached him: he wished well to Tanya,

and was ready to sacrifice himself in her behalf to any extent. But whence came his right to thus offer himself in her service? Their acquaintance had thus far been only of the slightest kind. True, he had met her occasionally at the banker's; now and then he had helped her in English studies; once he escorted her to her lodgings at the close of a literary entertainment where the two had accidentally met. Yet at best the girl could regard him only in the light of a good friend; and Forsyth already knew enough of the liberality of Russian ideas about women, and of the latitude allowed them, to feel how little he could presume upon an acquaintance thus restricted and incomplete. He also remembered that in Russia the friendship of sex is less open to the suspicion of love-making than in any of the older civilizations; and with this thought there came a question which the schoolmaster put frankly to himself: What likelihood was there of a girl like Tanya interesting herself in a foreigner, — a man strange to her race, of unlike blood, still new to the history, the traditions, and customs of her people? Great as was his and her power of intellectual assimilation, how could she ever understand him with her heart? A profound sadness now stole over him, — not unlike the feeling that possessed his soul when first the feeling of his love for her had emerged into his conscious life, — and though the depression

passed quickly away, he welcomed it while it lingered, since with chastening effect it recalled the true purpose of his journey; it helped him to separate the service he was glad to render from any thought of sentimental benefit to himself. He recognized that if he could only do his duty in simple, honest friendship, the future might well be left to take care of itself.

In the seventies, the journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow was performed in a little over twenty-four hours. The schoolmaster could not reach the old capital until the following day; with much leisure time at his disposal, he was able to utilize some of it in the exercise of dismounting at stopping-places along the route, of pacing platforms when there were any, or of strolling away into the steppe while the locomotive paused at some country station to take in water. He did this until the west grew red over miles of untouched forest, and the night breeze wafted to his nostrils the peculiar odor of wood smoke mingled with the damp smell of decaying leaves. When darkness came on, he passed into the third-class carriages to observe the characteristic types which they contained, — to see peasant and monk, unlike each other mainly in dress, sitting together for fraternal talk, the one hugging, it might be, an old brass samovar, the other fingering his rosary; and near by, chatting together in the same democratic at-

mosphere, the merchant, the student, the landowner, and the official. In this way Forsyth witnessed an unconventionality of traveling manners that, after the stiff formalism of his English experiences, pleased him not a little. The people seemed glad to be introduced to one another; they conversed eagerly and with the utmost frankness; much as life had divided them, — here by spatial, there by sociological distances, — all had something in common. So, instead of the cold distrust of our high civilizations, the schoolmaster noted a mutual confidence in people strange to one another, sometimes artless in its simplicity; instead of an intercourse based on likenesses of social rank or wealth, he observed an interest in human nature for its own sake that, while it humbled him, also called forth his admiration. Then he was charmed with the little kindnesses which the passengers showed to one another, — such as the fetching of hot water for tea from the buffet when meal time came, the caring for children in the temporary absence of their parents, or the making of sundry purchases at the wayside stations.

Forsyth, having made these observations, returned to his carriage and fell asleep. When he awoke, it was already full day. The forests had disappeared, and in their place had come ploughed land, cut up and partitioned into strange-looking patches of green and brown and yellow, with tints

of these that seemed to vary endlessly. From time to time the sun broke through the white clouds, and as it came forth, the cross on some village church would flash the radiance back over miles of steppe. By noon the suburbs of Moscow had come in sight; a few hours later, bidding good-by to a city where he would fain have lingered, the school-master found himself journeying southward and eastward through the heart of Great-Russia. The long plains, stretching to the horizon line, now began to grow monotonous, yet the traveler knew that he was on the richest soil of the empire, — the far-famed “black earth,” — and as he dismounted at wayside stations, or watched that perpetual intercourse between the train and the outside world which is in some sense peculiar to Russia, he felt the presence of a finer, nobler type of the common people than he had anywhere met since his departure from St. Petersburg. These tall, powerful men, with their rich beards, handsome faces, and healthy appearance; these plump, cheery-faced women, so different from the haggard-looking, half-bowed figures he had seen further north; and these chubby, strong-limbed children, not too scrupulously clean, but merry, playful, and childlike, as children ought to be, — all seemed, in the fancy of the moment, the beginnings of a mighty race that should yet, in its free and full development, make a noise in the world.

At Kozlów, where the train stopped for a few hours, Forsyth spent the time at his disposal in strolling up and down the long, wide thoroughfare of the town, in peering into the church at the head of it, in chatting with workmen and peasants whom he encountered in his walk. The next day, reaching Tsarítsyn, he sat several hours in the large waiting-room of the station, curiously interested in its motley throng of merchants, most of whom conversed in some dialect of Hebrew, through which Russian consonants and German gutturals seemed to have been plentifully scattered. At the wharf the schoolmaster took boat for his destination. The Volga had fallen to its autumn level, yet it was still a broad flood, over whose far stretches the eye wandered with pleasure. On the left, the bank lay flat and uninviting; to the right, it rose into cliffs, on whose sandy heights solitary cabins, single lines of houses, tiny villages, even towns, alternately reposed. It was at the foot of this right bank that the steamer disembarked passengers for E——.

An obscure feeling of satisfaction warned Forsyth, as he crossed the gangway, that he might hope for the best. So, indeed, it proved. At the office of the chief of police he learned something of Tanya. While on the boat she had made the acquaintance of its cashier, who had recommended

her to call on Varvára Maxímovna Buláieva. She had done so, and was now domiciled in the Buláiev house. This was all the officer knew. It was enough for the schoolmaster. The rest of the evening he spent in finding lodgings for himself.

CHAPTER VIII

AT THE BULÁIEVS'

THE schoolmaster, having spent the night in an old-fashioned hotel, devoted himself early next morning to the now easy task of finding Tanya. He could have reached her quickly by calling a *droshky*, but preferred to walk to his destination; he was tempted, in the prospect of the nearness of his interview, even to linger. It gave him an opportunity of speculating on all the things that now so deeply concerned him, — on what her new surroundings might be, on the mood in which he would find her, on her looks, on the way in which she would receive him. So, in spite of the very precise directions of his hotel porter, it took him nearly an hour to reach the thoroughfare in which she lived. In the meantime he found E—— to be a town of the type rather common on the lower Volga, — straggling as a French *bourgade*, with wide streets that ran now up and now down, with wooden structures that had nothing save an official building or a gaudily painted church to relieve the exceeding monotony of their aspect. As was the case in all provincial cities, the houses, being with-

out numbers, had to be identified by their nearness to squares, corners, shops, churches, or public structures. Známenskaya Street, in which Tanya lived, was a thoroughfare that, without pavements, ran for about a mile along the summit of the cliff, giving a view from portions of it far over the river. It was a sleepy-looking street, and had not a peasant's cart creaked its way through from time to time, would have been noiseless.

After some inquiry, Forsyth found the building of which he was in search. It was a one-story house, with a small *entre sol*; it stood within a spacious courtyard inclosed by a tall fence of high palings. Through this inclosure entrance was obtained on the street side by a large double-doored gate for vehicles, and by an adjacent smaller door which pedestrians could open by pulling forward an iron knob. Over the entrance-way an iron plate bore the inscription of a former proprietor:—

This house belongs to the
Widow of the Honorable Citizen
Malánya Yakóvlevna Buláieva.

The front door of the building, after the manner of old provincial houses in Russia, faced the courtyard. Within the inclosure, in addition to the domicile itself, stood a bath-house, a stable, and a large log hut used for living purposes by the domestics.

The schoolmaster, having passed through the

gate, approached the front door and knocked. In a few moments his summons was answered by a strongly built young girl of the peasant type, who, with her dress tucked up at the waist, had hastened for the purpose from her household duties. Whom did he want to see? "Tatiána Vladímirovna." The girl showed her white teeth in a broad smile as she repeated the name with an expression of assent. Then, with a hearty "Come in!" she led him up a short staircase, through a vestibule, into a spacious, airy, and well-lighted room, which he at once recognized, despite its quaint appearance, as the *zala* or reception-room of the Russian country house. A burst of song from three bird-cages, hung at as many windows, greeted the visitor as he took a seat.

When the first surprise of this novel reception had passed away, Forsyth began curiously to examine his surroundings. He found himself in an old-fashioned interior that had survived probably fifty years of the rapidly changing life of the provinces. It had the customary waxed floor, which no carpet had ever profaned, but whose light-brownish surface was relieved here and there with the brightly colored patches made by half a dozen Persian rugs. The walls were papered with gorgeous designs of paradise birds perched on blossoming branches. In each corner of the ceiling the decorator had painted a flower-pot, with its

three roses pointing towards a central wreath of blossoms, in the middle of which were some emblematical letters, the meaning of which Forsyth could not make out. On one side of the room stood an antique stove faced with glazed white bricks; between the windows long mirrors stretched themselves; here and there were miscellaneous specimens of Vienna furniture, the most conspicuous of them being a stout cabinet of *bric-à-brac*, through whose glass doors one could see china-ware, figures of bisque, antique coins, spoons, and the like. A side table held the small but daintily carved figure of an angel with wings outspread; near it, under a glass case, was displayed an artificial "Easter egg" of generous proportions. The single picture in the room was a somewhat faded engraving of Peter the Great. In the corner opposite him Forsyth saw, in place of the single ikon he had been accustomed to find in Russian households, several holy images, representing not only the Saviour and the Virgin Mary, but also various popular saints of the Russo-Greek Church. Aureoles of gold surrounded the heads of the figures, each of which was heavily framed in silver; before the images, pendant from the ceiling, hung blue-glass lamps encased in silver holders.

The apartment in which the schoolmaster sat opened into a room adjacent through an archway of delicately carved wood, up the side pillars of

which climbed ivy creepers, mingling their leaves with the tendrils of the common *Arónova borodá*.¹ There was in this second apartment an abundant provision of chairs and settees, though the originally bright hues of their damask coverings had already grown dim with age. From the principal sofa, which faced the arch, a Turk's head, forming the conspicuous embroidery of a pillow, gazed with its terrible eyes at the visitor; on the white covers of the tables, strange crocheted birds disported themselves.

Forsyth could not help noticing the scrupulous neatness of the interior. He was still more impressed with the air of cheerfulness and comfort that everywhere pervaded the domicile whose acquaintance he had thus suddenly made. None the less did he find himself wondering how Tanya could make herself at home in surroundings so whimsical and apparently so ultra-orthodox. While he speculated, a clock which he had not before observed began to strike, or rather to cuckoo eleven. At the same instant a child emerged from the parlor, and standing beneath the carved arch, pointed to the cuckoo with her little arm outstretched, but with her gaze fixed on the visitor. The golden ringlets, the large blue eyes, the gleeful expression of the face, struck Forsyth as English rather than Russian; yet there was something un-

¹ Aaron's beard.

mistakably Slav in the length of the chin and the contour of the cheek. No sooner had the cuckoo disappeared than the child's mother entered the room. The schoolmaster saw a woman of rather short stature, looking probably twenty-eight years or thereabouts. She wore a loose gown of some light woollen stuff, whose wide folds did not altogether conceal the slender build of the wearer. The features were decidedly pleasing, not to say pretty: though colorless, they had not yet lost the plumpness of youth; while if the rather high bridge of the nose gave a definite character to the physiognomy, this was preserved from undue severity by a pair of soft gray eyes that seemed to tell both of sensibility and goodness. The head was somewhat compressed at the sides, yet the height of the forehead had intellectual promise in it enough to satisfy the most fastidious. Forsyth noticed the peculiar dryness of the woman's hands as she offered him her right; the slight tremor in them, together with the fineness of her skin, gave him later the impression of a highly sensitive nervous organization. Her face had lighted up the moment she heard him explain that he was from St. Petersburg, and had come in regard to Tanya.

"How glad she will be to see you!" was her remark.

Forsyth added that Miss Lobanóva had many friends in the capital who were solicitous regarding her welfare.

"No wonder," was the lady's reply. "But perhaps you prefer to talk French?" she queried, observing his foreign accent. "How lucky it was," she went on in that language, "that she came to us! You smoke, of course?"

Forsyth admitted that he did; though after gazing for a moment at the handsome silver cigarette case offered to him, he explained that he cared only for cigars. It was an English habit that clung to him.

Varvára Maxímovna Buláieva, having lighted her cigarette, handed the match to her visitor. Then, drawing an easy chair close to the school-master, — her hands trembling a little, her eyes half closing as the first whiff of smoke reached them, — she continued: "No wonder a girl like Tanya has friends, and no wonder that she keeps them. How is she? — looks the picture of health, and goes on studying as if nothing had happened."

Forsyth replied that he had hoped as much, though he had also feared the effects of so sudden and unusual an experience on a sensitive nature like hers.

Varvára Maxímovna scarcely noticed the remark. "Yes," she said musingly; "Tanya teaches a lesson to many of us, even to our whole nation, if it could but learn. We need more like her, and they will come in time. Until then, what is to become of us? Our age is full of people with

only half aims, half beliefs. They do not want anything very much, or very strongly. I sometimes think many of them are only half alive."

The schoolmaster, who had not quite caught the drift of her remark, ventured to say something about the lack of industrial development in Russia and the possibility that, with native exploitation of the country's resources, much of the prevailing inactivity and absence of enterprise would disappear.

"No," the lady quickly replied, "it is not indolence that I mean. It is not Oblómovism.¹ The defect is more positive than that. I was thinking of the lack of a definite view of life, and a definite purpose in it. The trouble with people is that so many of them don't know what they are in the world for, and don't seem to know that they are in it for anything particular. Opinions they have in plenty, but no strong, deep convictions. When a crisis comes, they don't know where they stand; and, indeed, few of them care. You must have met such people, Mr. Forsyth?"

"Indeed I have," he replied, with an amused smile. "We have plenty of them in England, without going any further."

"It is a great thing, is it not, to know what you want, and work steadily and hopefully towards

¹ "Oblómov," the indolent hero of Goncharóv's novel of that name.

it? Well, Tanya has just that capacity. She is one of those 'whole natures,' — *tsel'naya natura*, as we call it; natures well balanced, who know what they may expect from life, who choose their path, and cannot be turned aside from it by any misadventure, however painful. That, I suppose," added the speaker, "is why she is so much liked, shall I not say needed, by people? Associating with her, they feel the solidity of her character, and get something of its strength. She gives moral support to others, but never seems to need any herself."

Having said this in a sort of soliloquy, Varvára Maxímovna walked as far as the window, and looked out. Forsyth assented to her characterization, and in doing so thought he had never heard anything said of Tanya that was at once so apt and so true. Then he found himself wondering that in surroundings so odd he should have met a woman of such evident culture as Varvára Maxímovna had shown herself to be; he was above all surprised to hear such excellent French spoken in the provinces. The touch of coquetry in the lady's manner, though unobtrusive, was unmistakable.

"She is out, I presume?" he asked, as Varvára Maxímovna returned from the window.

"Yes; she left home a few minutes before you came to make her call at the police station."

The schoolmaster remembered that administra-

tive exiles were expected to report once a day to the local authorities, and that the formality consisted of signing one's name in a book.

"Won't you come and see our study?" So saying, she led the way to an adjacent room that had been fitted up as a library. It had the bird wall-paper decorations he had seen elsewhere, but the furniture — consisting of writing-tables, desks, bookshelves, and a cosy lounge — was quite modern. One of the desks was pointed out as Tanya's. On the shelf above it Forsyth noticed an Italian grammar, Mill's "Political Economy," Herbert Spencer's "First Principles," a copy of Buckle, some writings of Fleróvsky and Shelgunóv, the "History of Philosophy" by Lewes, Darwin's "Origin of Species," the "Natural Selection" of Wallace, other books by Karl Marx, Lassalle, and Schultze-Delitsch, together with some numbers of "The Annals of the Fatherland," and the "Vyéstnik Yevrópy" (European Messenger). The schoolmaster observed that the "Political Economy" of Mill was the Swiss edition with Chernishévsky's preface; in Fleróvsky and Shelgunóv he recognized writers on social and economical subjects just then becoming remarkably popular among the educated classes. As he looked round the room, his eye lighted on a corner in which hung some half a dozen holy images, not unlike those he had seen in the parlor, but simpler in design and much less costly.

Varvára Maxímovna must have caught the half-puzzled, half-amused expression on his face, for she said: "You are surprised, and no wonder! We inherited this house from my husband's uncle. All these things came with it, — papering, bird-cages, holy images. So, out of respect to the memory of the dead people, we did not care to inaugurate any reforms, — I mean to make any changes, — at least for the present."

"Which is exactly the position our conservatives take," broke in a soft, musical voice which made Forsyth's heart leap, for he recognized it as Tanya's. The girl had come in unannounced. In her delight at seeing an old friend from St. Petersburg, she impulsively gave the schoolmaster both her hands. Then, taking a seat near him, she plied him with questions regarding her acquaintances in the capital. Her main concern naturally had Sonya for its object, yet she was scarcely less eager for anything the schoolmaster could tell her of Anícia Ivánovna. During the conversation Forsyth learned that she heard from her friend every few days. A letter which Tanya showed him from his sister indicated that Sonya's malady had entered upon a critical stage. No word had been received of Anna Petróvna, who was supposed to be still in a prison of preliminary detention, awaiting the final disposal of her case. Loth as he felt to go, the schoolmaster would have taken

his leave after this preliminary conference, had not Varvára Maxímovna urged him to remain for the rest of the day. She expected her husband in before long, and hoped for the evening to have the society of some of the administrative exiles located in E——.

At the dinner-table the schoolmaster made the acquaintance of Victor Affanásevich Buláiev. He was a tall man, of robust physique, with somewhat irregular features framed in a heavy growth of hair that extended from chin to brows. The eyes were blue, the skin freckled, the nose slightly *retroussé*, after a common Russian type. With these characteristics went simple manners, a plenitude of genial sympathy in intercourse, and a marked deference to Varvára Maxímovna. The happy temper of both husband and wife made the party a gay one. Matriona served, with a broad smile or a joke constantly on her lips. Forsyth now tasted sterlet for the first time, and drank sparingly of wine from the Krym. Finally cigarettes were produced, and everybody smoked. It was three o'clock before Victor Affanásevich returned to his bookkeeping. Half an hour later, the schoolmaster, acting on the advice of Varvára Maxímovna, had thrown himself on the lounge in the study, and was soon asleep. The fatigues of the past few months still lay heavy upon him. Yet he had only a disturbed rest, and at last awoke,

vaguely dissatisfied with himself. Nor could the healthy, contented look on Tanya's face—not as he recalled it, but rather as it haunted him—bring him more than a scant consolation.

That evening, spent with the administrative exiles, Forsyth long remembered. It was his fortune to meet a remarkable company of men and women, strange not in their appearance or manners, but only in the fact that, while nominally free, and permitted to engage in certain occupations for a livelihood, they were really prisoners in the place of their banishment, and under obligation to report themselves regularly to the authorities. At first he was reminded of the English ticket-of-leave system, but reflection showed him that the cases were not even superficially analogous, since most of the exiles had been interned in the province, without preliminary trial, for offenses of a trivial character, while all were persons of education, even refinement. He found the women young and of quiet disposition, accepting their lot as a mere incident of life, and anxious only regarding means of subsistence; the men not yet of middle age, and though parted from the great currents of life, none the less intellectually active, cheerful of mood, and full both of courage and of hope. It was of painful interest to hear the experiences of such people,—to know that, from the English point of view,

they cherished no hostile designs against the state, but had simply betrayed in their conduct or conversation a desire to give it a higher development, — that they had been exiled, one apparently on the ground that his dangerously superior intelligence warranted the step ; another because he had been cunning enough to prepare for a police raid on his domicile by taking care that nothing of a compromising character should be found ; a third for the reason that he had been caught with a forbidden publication in his hand just after it had been thrust by some unknown person into his letter-box ; and a fourth because he had lifted his hat to a lady immediately after her arrest on a charge of “political untrustworthiness.” To know all this was to wonder at the lack of official humor which such cases betrayed, as well as at the patience with which the exiles acquiesced in the official effort to eliminate their “disloyal” tendencies.

In such a gathering there was much to be sad about, yet the night passed in that delightfully informal way which Forsyth had found to be characteristic of all gatherings of educated people which he had attended in Russia. Mingled with the exiles were some of the most liberal-minded people in E—— ; and as the guests stood chatting in groups, or sat together on Varvára Máximovna’s divans, or passed in couples from room to

room in pleasant talk, the schoolmaster saw everywhere the easy confidence of a natural intercourse which, by putting aside the conventionalities that tend to make people indistinguishable from one another, brought out those individualities of manner, speech, and character that alone give to social life its primitive and essential quality, — the indescribable charm of variety. In such surroundings he felt anew how much the older civilizations had lost by their effort to bring personality under the assimilating control of the fashion-plate, the book of table decorum, or the rule in etiquette. Above all he marveled how, in a society so painfully stressed from above as was the Russian, there could be a boldness of thinking and a freedom in manners of which the nations reputed to be free had not yet developed more than the rudiments.

Meanwhile the evening passed quickly. Varvára Maxímovna served tea, while Tanya ministered to the entertainment of the guests with the zeal and self-sacrifice of an ideal hostess. When the time came for music, the exiles stood together and sang the far-famed river song of the Russians, dear to Slavs everywhere, but dearer than all to dwellers along the Volga, whose broad, swelling, beneficent waters invite them by day and by night to share in its freedom. Never before had Forsyth listened to this fragment of the Russian *Volkslied*; and as its strange, fascinating melody

rose, — the deep voices of the men blending with the high, clear notes of the women, — he fancied that he heard in it unique elements which needed only the master hand of a great composer to weave them into a world-compelling song. Then other strains succeeded, — strains that seemed to voice personal suffering touched with a mild note of despair, and under the influence of these Forsyth took his hat, lit a cigar, and strolled out from the rear of the house as far as a natural terrace that overlooked the Volga. It was still October, and though the night air cooled his brow, the flood before him lay yet untouched by frost. The Great Bear had passed its lowest point in the north, and was beginning to climb the east once more in the path along which he had so often followed it in far-away England. For a moment the childish doubt entered his mind whether he were not really at home, looking up into heaven from the old garden in Lincolnshire: were not these the same shining spheres that had for so long filled his boyhood with the color of scientific romance? Then he remembered, in a thought not wholly pleasant, how deeply his life had changed. Did he not belong already to another civilization?

From the house behind him the sounds of song began to die away. He heard the strange, sharp creak of the watchman's rattle in the thoroughfare near by. Then a silence, and the thought of

Tanya, which he had resolutely hushed, arose with new force in his soul. He had seen her that night transfigured. As with downcast eyes and gentle smile she caressed little Assya, there had seemed to come into her face a radiance like that with which a young love, if only in some rare moment of its highest mood, invests the object of its devotion. Nor did he much regret that, since his first conference in the afternoon, he had enjoyed but little of her society. In so large and miscellaneous a company, a hasty and therefore unsatisfactory *rencontre* was all he could reasonably expect. Besides, he feared to embarrass her — for the present, at any rate — with any suspicion of his new interest. Would it not spoil the perfect naturalness, the exceeding simplicity, and therefore the charm of their relations for the girl to feel, however vaguely, that he thought of her with other thoughts than those of a friend? He was yet far from daring to hope that her half-serious, half-gentle politeness towards him — much like that of a student for her professor — would ever undergo any real change; and so in that land of plains, as if by antithesis, the image came to him of heights inaccessible.

CHAPTER IX

ARRIVAL OF PLATÓNOV

TANYA had now been three months at E——, three months, that is to say, an administrative exile, separated by more than a thousand versts from the city where she most loved to be. The change which had wrenched her from it had been sudden and painful, —it had given no slight shock to a nature unusually refined and sensitive; yet it could make no permanent inroad upon the customary tenor of a life so full of sweet and serious purpose as was hers. It is one of the compensations of our human existence that when a disappointment or a sorrow fails to crush us, it remains with us as a new condition to which we gradually adapt ourselves; it is one of the contradictions of such existence that when the process of adaptation is complete, we awake to find our sorrow so clothing us like a garment that in time it comes to be a companion with which we cannot easily or immediately dispense. Thus it had been in the case of Tanya, who already felt that when the moment came to renew the associations of her former life, she would turn to the new conditions thereof with

something akin to regret. Sure, nevertheless, as she was of this, the girl held unswervingly to the course she had marked out for herself when a student in St. Petersburg. Finding anew at Varvára Maxímovna's her old delight in books, she took up again and pursued her studies with the unabated ardor of youthful enthusiasm. The morning hours she usually spent at her desk, amid a litter of papers and a bewildering array of open books, with little Assya playing not far away, for now the fair young child and the handsome teacher had become inseparable companions. Here, too, in the pauses of work, she jotted down her experiences and impressions, committing to the pages of her diary a maturity of observation and a ripeness of thought that had been denied to the earlier records of her life as a schoolgirl. In the afternoon, when weather permitted, Tanya would accompany Varvára Maxímovna and her husband for a sleigh ride, the rest of the evening being spent either in reading or in conversation. Forsyth came over from time to time with help for her English work; now and then she read German with one of the administrative exiles; while another of her acquaintances, who had lived some years in Florence, assisted her in Italian. The girl was so eager to learn, she worked so conscientiously, and was withal so appreciative, that it became a genuine pleasure to teach her. As, moreover, services of

this kind in the exile colony had no mercenary character, being given in the spirit of comradeship and mutual help, the relation of teacher and pupil acquired the charm of a delightful social intercourse.

Tanya enjoyed to the full this luxury of self-improvement; yet there was one trouble which she could not forget. Bringing to E—— a mind richly stored with pedagogical principles, she had hoped to find some school in which to exercise her chosen vocation, but had soon found that, as an administrative exile, the authorities did not permit her to teach. The girl felt this deprivation all the more keenly because it had frequently fallen to her lot while in E—— to notice the utter lack of scientific principles which still characterized the methods of Russian education in the provinces. Nay, she had been reminded of it morning after morning; for, looking through her bedroom window, she could see the melancholy outlines of a little parish schoolhouse that stood not far from the Church of the Three Saints. It was a low, wooden structure which, though recently whitewashed, had a depressingly weather-beaten appearance, and was really in the last stages of decay; while the two small oval windows through which light entered the building seemed in Tanya's lively imagination to give it the aspect of a white face with blind eyes, such as those one

sees in statuary. Often the girl's heart had ached as she saw groups of poorly clad boys, with bags slung over their shoulders, trooping towards its low doorway.

One morning an irresistible desire came upon her to visit the school and see for herself how the pupils were being taught. It was a parish institution in charge of the priest, Father Iván; but as that worthy had no ambition to distinguish himself in the realm of pedagogics, having besides other duties to attend to, the actual work of training the young had been left to the church sexton, old Father Gregory. When Tanya entered the building, she found the scholars reciting in chorus the formula, "*Bukiartsy-az-ra-bra*," in accordance with an old-fashioned and senseless system of teaching the pronunciation of syllables by the use of the alphabet. The school had not been open more than half an hour, yet six delinquents were already ranged along the wall of the room, each doing penance on his knees. Father Gregory had a refractory boy by the ear, and was tugging away at that member as if the pupil's salvation depended upon its removal. At the sight of his visitor, the sexton looked somewhat confused; relinquishing his hold of the lad, he hastened to offer Tanya a chair, which he accompanied with a few words of welcome. Then, returning to the culprit, he exclaimed sententiously, "Try to do

better next time. The root of knowledge is bitter, but the fruits thereof are sweet."

As Tanya looked on and listened, — for the senseless repetition had again begun, — she could not repress a rising sense of bitterness, in which much indignation was mingled. For she saw before her, in full vogue, methods of tuition which even Russian pedagogy had long before consigned to its psychological lumber-room. Soon the girl found herself wondering how under such methods even the mere capacity for reading could be developed.

"Is there any advanced pupil here," she suddenly asked, unable to contain herself, "who knows how to read?"

Father Gregory, who, as the lesson proceeded, had been pacing the floor ruler in hand, looking not unlike a gigantic stork, now stood stock-still, so great was his surprise. A lad of twelve stood up and read, with a fair amount of intelligence, but with scant attention to pronunciation, an account of the Creation. A catechism exercise followed. With the book held close to his face, the pedagogue asked the printed questions in a harsh, jerky voice, while the lads replied in listless fashion, blundering at every step, and betraying only rarely any consciousness of the meaning of the words they were compelled to utter. Now and then Father Gregory's eyes

sparkled wrathfully, and the ruler rose in menace, but only to descend with crushing force on the desk.

"Ah," muttered the man querulously, "they don't know what's good for them. No," he added, shaking his head, with a side glance at his visitor, "they love idleness and mischief a hundred times more than study. Birchwood porridge,¹—that's what they need!"

It was with moistening eyes that Tanya watched this travesty of education and thought of the mental monstrosities such a system was certain to produce, to say nothing of the physical evils which, through neglect of hygiene, must inevitably follow in its wake. She now realized as never before the enormous chasm that separated the wisdom and humanity of the new pedagogy from the arrogance and folly, the ignorance and cruelty, of the old methods of teaching. In a flash she was back again in her place at the "Pedagogical Courses for Women," and seemed to hear the sympathetic voice of the professor saying, "Always remember, young ladies, that in a well-conducted school punishments of any kind are unnecessary. A good teacher cannot have bad scholars. The main difficulty is how to keep the attention of your pupils. You will best secure this by varying your subject, and by introducing exercises to the end of

¹ *Berezóvaya kasha*, the rattan.

relieving one faculty and bringing another into play. Your constant care, at every step, must be to interest your pupils. This is the key to all pedagogical success."

Tanya waited to hear the boys sing the *Bogoróditsa*,¹ and then made her way into the open air and sunshine. The remembrance of her professor's words had plunged her into a flood of delightful reminiscences. How sweet it had been to be taught the art of teaching in those halycon days that now seemed so far away! With what passionate enthusiasm had not the girl devoted herself to the dissemination of the new gospel of pedagogics! What resolutions she had formed! What prospects had opened up before her! Hers, she had assured herself, should be a model school, so far as she could make it one; and who knew what greatness of mind and of character it might not be the means of developing! Forthwith, therefore, she tried to picture to herself the ideal institution which it was her ambition to found. First tracing its handsome exterior, she entered the creation of her fancy, and recognized in it all that a school-house interior ought to be, — well-lighted, well-ventilated, adequately warmed; ay, she seemed to breathe its pure air constantly renewed, and saw its spacious rooms flooded with sunshine. On its walls were displayed, not only maps, but produc-

¹ Prayer to the Virgin Mary.

tions of artistic value, and pictures representing various aspects of the industries and outdoor life of the peasants; while on the tables lay blocks, cubes, spheres, and other suggestions of the immortal genius of Fröbel. Already she saw her pupils,—healthy-looking, clean, and neatly dressed; already, in their bright and intelligent faces, she noted the eagerness to learn and the delight in knowledge which it was the especial aim of the new pedagogy to draw forth.

Then, as she reverted to the badly lighted and worse ventilated schoolroom, to the dreary lessons without a scintilla of interest, finally to the pedagogue himself, with his terrible "*Bukiartsyaz-ra-bra*," his catechism, his ruler, and system of chastisements,—her heart leaped within her in revolt. That she should be prohibited from exercising the function of teacher was a personal humiliation keenly felt; yet she allowed her mind to dwell more on the wrong done to the school than on the injustice to herself. Was it for the best interests of the children that a representative of the old system should be their instructor, while she, a trained teacher, equipped with modern methods, must be kept away from them as if her very breath carried contamination? True, they belonged to the poorest, perhaps the least intelligent class. Was not the duty to them all the more urgent? Did they not need, more than any

other, the strengthening influence of a sound education? “Shades of Ushínsky and Polevóy and all ye other workers in the field of popular education, how long yet shall your principles remain unknown in the Russian schoolhouse, and on the ears of how many generations of Russian teachers still to come shall your names fall as empty sounds?”

When Tanya reached home, her depression passed away like a morning mist, for on her desk lay several letters from St. Petersburg, among them one in Sonya’s well-known handwriting: —

MY DEAR TANYA, — Since writing to you last, I have been altogether confined to my room. My last relapse weakened me much, and I am only now beginning to recover, — oh, how slowly! If these dark, dragging months would only come to an end! When the weather is finer than usual, — you know I can feel but cannot see it, — I long to be in the crisp air, among the gay crowds, amid the quickly moving vehicles, — anywhere where there is life. It stimulates, it gives me hope. For the moment I think I am part of it; and though you will smile at the idea, I sometimes fancy that it needs me. Yet to be out, even in a carriage, has become for me a rare privilege; unless the sky is clear, I am forbidden to move; and to-day, after lying for hours in my cosy room, I find my-

self pillowed up in bed, with the little desk before me and my pen in hand. Outside, there is a fine St. Petersburg rain falling; and through the bespattered windows I have had, not wishing it, glimpses of a dreary sky that made me shudder. Earlier in the day I thought of myself as a poor weak bird trailing its bedraggled feathers under the eaves until the rain should have passed; now I have less hope, and I picture to myself a frail boat that is carried fast over the sands by a receding tide. Yes, Tanya, my life is ebbing just like that. Sometimes I have revolted at the prospect of going, but the inevitable necessity of it soon tames me, and I am reconciled. A little sooner or a little later, — is it really of much importance? Two days ago Papásha renewed his offer of a trip to the Crimea, or even to Italy; nay, he urged me more strongly than ever. I knew what was coming, and firmly shook my head. No, dear, I have n't the courage. It would tempt me to long for that which I feel is impossible. To lie awhile longer in an earthly paradise, — to be under blue skies, where the air is balmy and the sunlight bathes everything, — that would only fill me with unavailing regrets, and of them I would be spared as much as may be. I am a coward? Perhaps I am. But St. Petersburg is a place where one can die easily.

Yesterday being my birthday, Papásha had a

moleben.¹ Priests came, and the great image of the Holy Mary was borne in. The wax candles, of which there were many, made a fine illumination; the chanting seemed exquisite; the rooms were filled with incense. What a crowd of people! All prayed, — father, Constantine, Nyánya, and the servants. Even Miss Forsyth prayed, in the English way, with her face hidden in her hands. From time to time many a glistening eye fixed itself on me. How impressive it all was! Yes, it touched me profoundly. Yet I confess, Tanya, though I fell on my knees like the rest, I could not pray. With all my gratitude for the interest shown, I never was a greater skeptic than I felt myself to be at that moment. For in the midst of it all I thought I was away in ancient Rome, and seemed to be looking on at the pomp and magnificence of some pagan spectacle. But very soon a change came in my mood. The penetrating odor of the incense had begun to affect me. As the priest swung his censer, first it poured upon the air in bluish-gray streams, then hovered over our heads in faint cloudlets, and finally diffused itself, the dreamy influence of it all the while going to my soul, until I remembered what some believers say of it, that it is the atmosphere of another world. Gradually, too, my heart softened to the

¹ Church service, sometimes conducted in the house of a parishioner, as thank-offering, or in supplication.

praying, and with so many around me kneeling, — Papášha prostrate before the holy image, and Nyánya bowing her head to the floor, — there came to me also a longing to pray. One glance at the Madonna was enough. In a flash I divined the supreme naturalness — nay, the necessity — of what I had before regarded as an empty mummary. The image of Mary now took on a new meaning. For the first time I began to appreciate the deep human interest which it must always possess as symbol of a love so high and unselfish that one might almost call it divine. Nor could one wonder that power must belong to this ikon: had not thousands, perhaps millions of human beings, needing some concrete form in which to see their ideal embodied, brought to it their sorrows, their supplications, their hope and faith and love? I began even to see how, invested with so great a power by countless acts of belief and worship, it might even work what are called miracles. So, melted to reverence myself, though having nothing to long for, I kissed the crucifix, received the blessing of the priest, and felt in some way at peace and reconciled. Ah, Tanya, you will say I am a bundle of contradictions; but I could not do other than I did.

Now, a word or two about Papášha and Constantine. I sometimes have strange, even sorrowful thoughts about them both. Constantine is

completely changed, and in so short a time! The other day he spent a whole afternoon with me. I found him amiable and kind, as usual; but there is a deep sadness behind it all which I cannot understand. The lad has some great burden on his mind, perhaps on his heart as well. Then father is not himself, nor are his relations with Constantine what they once were. Outwardly there is no change, yet the men seem embarrassed in each other's presence. When they are both with me, I sometimes fancy that I can feel a tension. Or is it all a mere result of my ill-health? I wish it were, for it makes me anxious.

Last, dear, let me speak of yourself. You are indeed much on my mind. I often think of our long walks in St. Petersburg, and of the happy times we spent together before trouble came to us both. Do you ever remember those evenings in the Litéinia, — those evenings of music, of happy laughter, and of serious talk? Are you still mindful of that summer midnight when, sitting together ill at ease, the thought seized us to wander forth, and how, walking an hour together in the silent morning, we came home at last refreshed and fell asleep in each other's arms? Do you remember, too, that strange winter rencontre at the Public Library with the proud, poorly dressed man whom we pitied, for we thought him starving; and how, after he had gone, obtaining his address from the

doorkeeper, and bent on bringing him food, we sought him a whole evening without success? So fair it was, that life of ours, — so full of interest and devotion! — yet it is not to return! But, Tanya dear, I will not make you sad. I trust, rather, that you are gay and hopeful in the new surroundings. I try to picture to myself the sleepy little town where you live, — its rambling streets and crooked byways, — and then the Známenskaya, high perched on the Volga bank, with that house which, as you describe it, is surely quaint enough to make even an invalid smile. The important thing is that you are among refined people, men and women with cultivated minds and warm, sympathetic hearts. I am grateful to the Buláievs for your sake; as for little Assya, — worthy as she must be of all the affection you lavish on her, — has she not captivated you, body and soul? You tell me that Mr. Forsyth is still at E——, and a frequent visitor at the Buláievs'. Yes, Tanya, — and chide me not for suggesting it, — I hope that some day Saxon and Slav will lay aside their political feud and become faithful allies. Is not that (no denial, my dear!) one of the forthcoming changes on the political horizon? I hear your merry laugh in response, but I shall not be surprised to find my prophecy come true, and to know that your cruel misfortune may, after all, have a very happy ending. Yet however that may be,

my heartfelt wishes will always go out for your welfare. One thing I know full well, that whomsoever you wed, the truest and deepest love will always be yours.

Now I must close. It is midnight; I ought to have been long asleep. Pardon, dear Tanya, all my folly and this last blotted page, which I have not strength to rewrite. The house is still as the grave. Indeed, the Greeks were right when they called sleep the brother of death. Nor am I to be long here. Wilt thou not remember her, Tanya, when thy friend is no more? Adieu! and may happiness and love be thine for ever and evermore!

SONYA.

Tanya had read with a sorrowful expression in her face, for the letter told, if between the lines, of sufferings borne with uncomplaining heroism. When she came to the closing paragraph, her own tears burst forth in spite of herself; they mingled on the blurred page with those of the dying friend until the reader's proud spirit seemed to reach the depths of bitterness. When, later in the afternoon, her calmness fully restored, Tanya returned to the letter, she noted the allusion to Forsyth with a sense of surprise. The fault of it was undoubtedly her own, for she had spoken of him quite frequently in her correspondence. Yet, in mentioning him as a visitor, she had not foreseen

the construction which, all innocently enough, had been put upon their acquaintance. That Sonya, who knew both, should have made this mistake, embarrassed her not a little.

When Forsyth arrived in the evening, a quick blush overspread the face of the girl as she gave him her hand. Her manner had a shyness not its wont, and even while they conversed, she seemed to avoid meeting his gaze. Forsyth himself felt the tension, and both were relieved by the entrance of Varvára Maxímovna. Tanya now quickly recovered her composure, while her customary cheerfulness, which had been painfully disturbed by Sonya's letter, came back as she recounted her experiences at the parish school. As one by one the exiles entered and the hours wore on, the girl felt the impulse of a generous remorse. She recalled the schoolmaster's many acts of kindness to her; above all, the aid he had given her in her studies. Was it possible that he could have an interest in her other than that of a friend? That idea would never have occurred to her had not Sonya suggested it. Even if it were true, faint as was her own credence, she would have been the first to respect the reserve of a proud, silent nature, slow to manifest itself and not over-conscious of its merits. Unresponsive to such an interest as she might be, the girl could not be cruel. So, taking place beside him, she sought, by the serious graces of many

little acts of attention, to make him amends for the slight coldness she had shown earlier in the evening. Nor was it wonder that, yielding himself to the abounding charm of her presence, Forsyth should see hues in her cheek and a light in her eye that, as he imagined, had never shone there before.

Early next morning, news came of the arrival of one of the Volga steamers from the south, and with it the sensational statement that the boat, while yet in mid-river, had been "frozen in." Some three hundred yards below the church on the opposite side of Známenskaya Street, the Volga cliff rises many feet above the level of the thoroughfare: and it was to this eminence that Forsyth now directed his steps. Ascending the slope, he saw the wide, frost-whitened steppe west of E——, with its great caravan road running almost parallel with the course of the river, and caught glimpses of long sleigh convoys laden with merchandise that had just been diverted from the river to the land route by the official proclamation announcing the close of navigation for the year; here and there a peasant's cart or traveler's carriage wound its way in and out of the heavily laden convoy; while in a gap between the sleighs a solitary horseman rode, his face protected from the wind by a *bashlyk* of coarse cloth rising to a sharp point above his head. Some of the trains of merchandise were drawn by

horses, others by camels ; and the sight of a camel in Europe was for Forsyth an unexpected novelty.

When the schoolmaster reached the top of the eminence, a still stranger spectacle presented itself. At this point the Volga, nearly a mile broad, makes an abrupt bend towards the town of E——, and then goes off again in an almost straight line towards the southeast. At first the upper reaches of the stream had been frozen, but a few days' thaw had precipitated their congealed masses into the bend before E——; here, held by shallows and banks, they had been frozen together by another fall in the temperature, until the whole sheet from shore to shore, for some five hundred yards north and south of the town, had the appearance of an ice-pack. In the very centre of this frozen mass lay a Volga paddle-steamer, its deck crowded with passengers. From these, signals were passing to people on the river-bank ; several carts had already gathered on the shore, and some half a dozen peasants were making their way across the ice towards the vessel. Having observed this much, the schoolmaster descended from the slope, returned along the Známenskaya past the church, and made his way through a side street, still descending, to the beach.

It was now broad morning, somewhat after ten o'clock. The wind had grown more biting, and though the spectators were few, there was already

on the shore a nondescript gathering of drivers, who had come eagerly enough in the hope of a profitable morning's work. From one of them Forsyth heard the story of the accident. The steamer belonged, not to the ordinary passenger fleet of the Volga, but to the irregular trade of the river, and had been dispatched from Astrakhan after the official closing of navigation in the belief that it would be able, despite the rapidly forming ice, to force its way up to Tsarítsyn. The block in the bend had proved too formidable for the iron prow of the steamer; after many vain attempts to pierce the obstacle, the pack closing up after him as he advanced, the captain had found himself and passengers effectually frozen in. Most of them were on their way to Moscow or St. Petersburg; for all, the disaster meant a prolonged journey by peasants' carts to the beginning of the railway line at Tsarítsyn.

By this time ropes had been lowered from the prow of the vessel; with the aid of planks laid over the doubtful ice near the steamer's hull, the people had already begun to descend. The schoolmaster carefully made his way over the frozen surface towards the steamer. He was desirous, under circumstances so novel, to see the disembarkation; he also felt curious to know who had been led by serious concerns — serious he felt they must be — to attempt so hazardous a journey after the close

of navigation. As he drew near, he noticed passengers descending the ropes, boatmen lowering luggage over the side of the steamer, and peasants carrying to their carts and sleighs a promiscuous variety of boxes, wraps, and other impedimenta of travel. Soon Forsyth became aware of a passenger who, smoking a cigarette, was pacing to and fro along an open space upon the deck. The man's movements seemed leisurely enough, — he walked with an easy, nonchalant swing, — yet something in them none the less suggested, not only alertness, but also power. If the body seemed to promise the litheness of a panther, the broad shoulders and massive head gave it an appearance almost leonine. The stranger, who stood some five feet ten inches tall, wore a light overcoat of manifestly foreign make, and a tightly fitting fur cap. A short, heavy black beard circled the chin, concealing it; there was a dusky fringe instead of side whiskers, and on the upper lip a full, dark mustache. The features — whose natural color had been heightened by exercise — were of the small, fine type that imply mental fibre; and yet it was perhaps the full nose, slightly curved, that gave to the face its salient character of strength.

Forsyth felt his curiosity piqued. Who could the nonchalant stranger be, and what was his business? The man did not look like a merchant, nor could he well be one of the higher officials. Had he

worn spectacles, it might have been possible to take him for a professor, or at least a well-to-do student. Might not a figure so western in its suggestions be after all a foreigner? It was while the schoolmaster was puzzling himself with these various conjectures that the unknown suddenly took a turn in his walk and disappeared. The rest of the passengers were visibly merchants, who had grasped all too eagerly at the opportunity unexpectedly presented of reaching Tsarítsyn with their goods by boat, and thus avoiding the high charges for land transit that prevailed during the winter months. There were also landowners, several officers going north, and a student with his wife. A group of Persians wearing conical caps of black Astrakhan had charge of a deck-load of nuts and dried fruit. One gorgeously uniformed Asiatic was pointed out to Forsyth as a Kalmuck prince, who had gladly surrendered his petty sovereignty in the steppes for the prospect of promotion in the Russian military service. The schoolmaster looked on a few moments longer; but when the rapidly falling temperature began to chill him through and through, he drew his fur coat tightly about him and turned to go.

Forsyth was by this time lodged at the house of the *diákonitsa*,¹ and it was while on his way thither that a rich voice smote his ear. It was that

¹ Wife or widow of the church deacon.

of the mysterious stranger whom he had seen on the steamer. The man was asking a sleigh-driver to take him to the House Buláiev. The driver replied that there were several houses bearing that title. Did he remember the proprietor's first name?

"I cannot recall his name," said the stranger, after a pause, "but I know the name of his wife, — Varvára Maxímovna."

"Varvára Maxímovna," repeated the driver, scratching his head. "I never heard that name before."

Forsyth now came forward. "I know the house you want," said he; "it is on Známenskaya Street, almost directly opposite the Church of the Three Saints."

The stranger hesitated for a moment, eyeing Forsyth searchingly; the schoolmaster returned the look with a glance of inquiring curiosity. Then, recovering himself, the newcomer thanked his informant, bowing politely as he did so. A moment later, seated in a broad, low sleigh, he was on his way in the direction of the Church of the Three Saints. As Forsyth looked after the receding figure, an inexplicable feeling of anxiety oppressed him, but only for an instant. When he reached the Známenskaya, the sleigh had disappeared, and the street was clear of pedestrians.

That evening the schoolmaster sat turning over

the pages of a book in the apartment which now served him both as sitting and reception room. An hour had sped since tea; in the adjacent kitchen the old lady was busying herself with household duties. As for Forsyth, the thoughts of the day were gone, and night had fallen like a benediction. It was one of those evenings in which, by some mysterious spell, the ongoings of the busiest existence are hushed to peace, and the heart, in the midst of its most distracting preoccupations, seems suddenly as if becalmed. No earthly nepenthe it is, but life itself, that weaves for us so subtle harmony of all our faculties, — life itself that sings its low, sweet song until the future spreads before us full of golden opportunity and boundless hope. It was a calm like this — a calm that is not of wind or wave, but of the soul itself that bids them be still — which Forsyth felt as he lifted the curtain and looked out upon the silent thoroughfare. The stars had a frosty glitter, but their wintry brilliance was somewhat paled, for on the window pane iridescent lights fell from a waxing moon that already rode high in the heavens.

The schoolmaster gazed long upon the celestial splendors, not yet reinforced by the tardy Orion. Then he returned to his book. It was a simple volume of poems; and as he turned over the pages once again, some faded rose leaves fell to the

floor. Hastily picking them up, he reverently replaced the petals, and by a singular abstraction of mind, straightway began to wonder again who the stranger was, and what might be his business with Varvára Maxímovna.

CHAPTER X

THE "NEW ERA" IN EDUCATION

VARVÁRA MAXÍMOVNA was seated in a high-backed chair in her front parlor, gazing dreamily at the quaint devices on the wall. Her mood was already reminiscent, and the gossip brought in about the steamer called up in her mind some very personal recollections. She vividly remembered the fair prospects with which fate had dowered her young womanhood, and when she came to contrast them with the rather commonplace, humdrum existence which it was her lot to lead at E——, a feeling of bitterness stole into her heart. Ten years before, with youth, beauty, intelligence, and ambition on her side, she had seemed able to mould her future by a mere act of will. Her brilliant success as a student at St. Petersburg, ending with her appointment as teacher at the gymnasium of R——, on the lower Volga, had called to her much attention in the pedagogic world, while her social attractions — the outcome partly of acquirements, partly of beauty — had drawn to her a host of admirers of both sexes. At a time when culture was magnetic for its own sake, many a

young man of fortune sought her hand, and plotting provincial mammas exhausted every expedient to bring the brilliant young teacher within the confines of their domestic circle. Varvára Maxímovna disdained all these opportunities. She had caught the intellectual fever of the time, and felt herself drawn by an irresistible impulse back to the new sources of knowledge which had just been opened in the capital. Moreover, an ambition to study medicine had gradually grown up within her until she felt that its gratification was necessary to her happiness. So the day at last came when her place in the R—— gymnasium was vacant, and the gossips of the place held up their hands in horror as they recounted how the girl had thrown away her best chances in life to be again a poor student in "Piter."¹

A part of this allegation was true, for when Varvára Maxímovna joined the Nikoláievsky Medical Courses, she was obliged to earn a rather modest livelihood with her pen by means of translations, articles for the press, and occasional verse, for all of which she showed considerable talent. This necessity, while it restricted her freedom, had many compensating advantages. The girl loved the intellectual excitement of St. Petersburg better than any enjoyment which was to be obtained from the merely social aspects of life. The gatherings of

¹ Colloquial for St. Petersburg.

students in which she took part, being dominated by mental interests and by the discussion of them, proved a contribution to her intellectual development of no mean importance. Then there was the stimulus to work and study that came to the girl from the consciousness that around her on every hand was the large, rushing life of a great cosmopolitan centre; that the very pavements along which she walked to and from the Nikoláievsky Courses had been trodden by the great writers of Russia; and that, as she fancied, even the city's atmosphere was still laden with their thoughts and aspirations. Her studies in medicine, moreover, had the special charm that they introduced her to circles in which ideas seemed to have a freedom enjoyed nowhere else in the capital, — to gatherings where questions of science, philosophy, society, and government were discussed with a boldness and disregard for convention and inherited prejudices that, after the tameness and slavishness of provincial opinion, appealed to her with a peculiar fascination.

It was at one of these gatherings that, in the second year of her life as a medical student, the girl met her future husband, Victor Afanásevich Buláiev. The young man, owing to some paltry "history" at the gymnasium, had been sent from it into the world with what is known as "a wolf's diploma;" hence, debarred from other educational

privileges, he was obliged to content himself with instruction at the University as a "free" student. His reputation was that of a good-natured, simple, honest fellow; and though his talents were not of a striking order, he was capable of warm attachments. From the moment of their meeting the lad had fallen deeply in love with Varvára Maxímovna. The ambitious girl hesitated over his suit, and might have passed by so ordinary a student; but the strength and pathos of his affection at last so moved her that in one of her sentimental moods, mistaking the sympathy and gratitude he had awakened for love itself, she married him. For a time the new life smiled upon them; with the delight of companionship, added to that of study, they continued to work together, striving for the prize which seemed now more nearly than ever within their reach. Yet when little Assya finally came, an unforeseen calamity stole with her into the household. The mother fell sick, and, despite medical attention, lingered for months without improvement, until it became evident that she could not recover in the capital, but must be removed to healthier surroundings beyond its borders. Sickness was hard enough to bear, but the cruelest blow for Varvára Maxímovna was that, after four years of study, she found herself compelled to give up work at the Courses.

As for the husband, he found it comparatively

easy to select a new place of sojourn. Chancing to have relatives at the town of E——, on the lower Volga, thither it was that, as soon as she could bear the excitement of travel, he had journeyed with his wife. It was in E——, moreover, that he succeeded in obtaining a tolerable position as a bookkeeper ; and though Varvára Maxímovna gradually recovered mere bodily health, the failure of her plans not only remained with her as an irremediable sorrow, but shadowed her mind with a profound melancholy. Her chief solace, in a disappointment that seemed to have crushed her life, was the gatherings of the exiles : in their presence she breathed anew the stimulating intellectual oxygen of the great city whose physical atmosphere had proved so injurious to her. Some of them she had known in St. Petersburg ; others had come to her with letters of introduction from friends at a distance. At no time had Varvára Maxímovna been at pains to conceal her liberal tendencies ; and though never herself “compromised,” she had always been ready with such services as she was able to render to the compromised class. On one occasion, intrusted with a package of forbidden literature when on her way from Moscow to the lower Volga, she had faithfully delivered the package at considerable risk to personal safety. It was this journey from Moscow to N——, part of it by water, that had been suggested to her by the news

regarding the steamer; and from the circumstances of her first connection with the exiles, she had passed by a natural association to recall the other events of her earlier life. As she sat wondering why she had not heard from her acquaintance at N——, the domestic announced a visitor.

"Who is it?" queried her mistress.

"A gentleman, — quite a fine-looking gentleman," repeated the girl, smiling. "He says he has a letter for you."

"Then ask him in."

A moment later, a tall, handsome man had crossed the threshold of the parlor, and stood, fur cap in hand, awaiting the pleasure of the hostess. He bowed slightly as Varvára Maxímovna advanced to meet him.

"My name," said he, on taking the proffered seat, "is Platónov. I come from the city of N——, where, I believe, you have friends."

She bowed assent. "Were you in the last boat?"

"I was," he replied, "and should have landed at the wharf had not the ice wedged us in."

"The latest trip is not always the safest."

"True. It was a venturesome journey; but what could one do? The roads are bad at the best, and a couple of days' jolting on a peasant's cart would not have been conducive either to one's health or one's temper."

“How, then, did you get ashore?”

“Oh,” said Platónov, “the peasants came to our assistance.”

“Quite a rescue!”

“It was, indeed. Without the sleighs we should have lain there till midnight, and the women might have frozen to death. By the way,” added the speaker, “I have a letter of introduction from your friend at N——.”

Varvára Maxímovna tore open the envelope, and was quickly lost in its contents. As she read, her face brightened. Not only did the missive revive pleasant memories of people she knew, it added another to the select company of her political acquaintances at E——. For Platónov also belonged to the “illegal” class, — was, in fact, one of its most trusted members. He had spent some months on a mission to the lower Volga, and was now passing through E—— on his way to Moscow. Having perused the letter twice, Varvára Maxímovna, impulsively offering her hand to the visitor, welcomed him in her warmest manner. Then she engaged him in conversation, and soon learned facts which it had not been deemed prudent to state in a letter, — such, for example, as that “Platónov” was an assumed, not his real name; that his mission to the lower Volga had been a mission to the exiles there; and that his purpose in going to Moscow was to establish in the old capital a secret print-

ing-press. The question then came up of his plans for sojourn in E——; and as it was agreed that an attempt to find lodgings in an hotel might involve some risk, Varvára Maxímovna found him not only willing but glad to accept the hospitality of an unused wing of the domicile in the courtyard, which, as she assured him, could with little trouble be fitted up for his accommodation. As soon as these preliminaries had been arranged, Platónov was enjoined to make himself thoroughly at home. He did this by throwing himself upon the sofa and falling into a sound slumber.

When Forsyth reached the house in the courtyard that evening, he was ushered into Buláiev's study, — the capacious apartment in which Varvára Maxímovna was nightly accustomed to receive her friends. The occasion being one of welcome to Platónov, the exiles had gathered in unusually large numbers; already a lively conversation was in progress. The schoolmaster passed to a seat near the centre-table, where the hostess had established herself, and was busy exchanging repartee with her guests. The first to greet him was Ossip Neroda, a stalwart, black-browed, taciturn Little-Russian from Khárkov, whose wife — a slight, girlish figure, with dark, round face, sparkling eyes, and shining white teeth — kept up further away an incessant chatter. Then he recognized the

Kiev professor, Radumírov, — a man who, widely known for his folk-lore investigations, had snatched an evening from his studies, and now, in the modest manner of a *savant*, contributed an occasional observation to the talk, or told some incident of his banishment from the holy city on a charge of favoring the independence of the Ukraine. Close by, with rugged features and somewhat dogmatic manner in debate, was the striking figure of Kachanóvsky, a schoolmaster by profession, who had fallen under the displeasure of the authorities on account of his too liberal views in matters of faith. The lawyer Kazimírov, who had been exiled to E—— for lifting his hat to a lady just after her arrest on a charge of “political untrustworthiness,” seemed to have forgotten alike his offense and the occasion thereof, for he talked flipantly about his professional experiences, and made everybody laugh with the story of a close-fisted merchant who had overreached him in a business transaction. In a shadowy corner of the room sat, silent most of the evening, a pale-faced, dark-complexioned Jewess, who had joined the colony only a week before. There was an expression as of pain in her face, due to the contracted eyebrows and tightly drawn mouth: the man she loved had “mysteriously disappeared,” and since that event she herself had become a suspect.

Forsyth noticed these and others, but failed to

find Tanya. In looking about for her, his gaze fell on a tall figure leaning against the cornice of a window, and half hidden by the foliage of a sleepy begonia. It was the stranger whom he had directed to Varvára Maxímovna's. The visitor was smoking a cigarette.

Piqued with sudden curiosity, the schoolmaster walked to the end of the room and had Buláiev introduce him.

"You are an Englishman, are you not?" asked Platónov.

"I am," was the reply.

"I thought so," mused Platónov; "though we don't often meet countrymen of yours so far south-east as this. Down the Rhine, for example, I have seen your nation well represented; on the lower Volga the English, as you would yourself say, are conspicuous by their absence."

"True," rejoined Forsyth; "Russia is a *terra incognita* for most of our people. With the exception of a few travelers, pure and simple, they come here merely for business purposes. The Russians, on the other hand, seem to scatter themselves all over Europe. By the excellence of your English pronunciation," added the schoolmaster, "I should judge it fair to assume that you yourself have spent some time abroad."

"I have; and perhaps — like not a few of my compatriots — I know some parts of western Europe better than I know Russia."

"I suppose," observed Forsyth, "that the custom of spending much of one's time abroad is not altogether a good thing for one's country."

"Not always. It may be a misfortune. In our case it has some compensating advantages. In the end it may even be a good thing for one's country."

"Why not?" broke in Varvára Maxímovna. "There are some things for which even exile may not be too high a price to pay, and one of them is a good education."

"I had not thought of that," Forsyth admitted. "Is the difficulty a serious one?"

"Serious enough," interjected Buláiev, "and becoming every day more serious."

At this moment Tanya entered and took a seat near Varvára Maxímovna. The girl's presence gave an emphasis to the remark that Buláiev had not anticipated.

"I heard some suggestion of it," Forsyth resumed, "before I left St. Petersburg, but I was led to believe at the Lyceum that the educational changes introduced since 1866 had opened up a new era by enabling Russia to compete with the most advanced nations of the world."

"New era, indeed!" rejoined Buláiev, with an ironical smile. "Call it rather a new tyranny!"

"You refer, of course, to the classical system. I myself know something of its one-sidedness, but

I do not fully understand why it should have proved so obnoxious to the students. Do they not value knowledge for its own sake, and is not even a little Greek and Latin better than none?"

Platónov drew the cigarette from his mouth. "Your dilemma is a natural one," said he. "You come from a country constitutionally governed, where a little more of the classics or a little less of them makes no difference: it raises discussion only among professional pedagogues. Besides, the English are too fond of the natural sciences to need any stimulus in that direction. Here the classical system is a state policy, and it has been introduced, as most of us believe, with the deliberate purpose of crippling the scientific side of education."

Platónov paused. He did not know how far he could count on Forsyth's interest. Yet as the schoolmaster, whose attention to the educational system had been very scant, encouraged him to proceed, he went on: "If a student wants a university training, he cannot get it by graduating from our *real* schools, that teach science and the modern languages: he must either bend his nose to the grindstone of classicism, — that is, pass through the classical gymnasia, — or go to a foreign university for his higher training. That is what I meant by saying that exile from Russia may have some compensating advantages."

“Do many of your students go abroad?”

“Only a few. The majority haven’t money enough to carry them fifty miles out of St. Petersburg.”

“So the provision that no student shall enter a university without having passed through the classical gymnasia amounts, for large numbers of pupils, to a positive deprivation.”

“Not only that, but the young fellows deprived are the brightest and most promising students we have in Russia. There is the stupidity of it.” With a scornful look on his face, Platónov lit a cigarette.

“Our friend is right,” observed Buláiev. “Not only is the classical system a state policy: it has not even the shadow of a pedagogical justification. It was introduced, we were told, to round out our educational system, and put us on an equal footing with Germany and France. Its real purpose was to stamp out liberal thought in the schools. The Minister of Education admitted as much when, in 1867, he publicly defended classicism as an inculcator ‘not only of the old tongues, but also of the old virtues.’”

“The virtues of unconditional obedience!” interrupted Varvára Maxímovna, and everybody laughed. “Perhaps he had teachers in his mind.” Then, turning to her companion, the hostess added, “What say you, Tatiána Vladímírovna?”

"The teachers were undoubtedly meant in the first instance," replied Tanya; "the classical system as a whole seems to be aimed at the people. It is an attempt, I should say, to introduce reactionary tendencies of thought that cannot possibly take root in Russia, — of that I am convinced."

"Do you, then, reject the classical system because it is European?" asked Forsyth.

"Not for a moment. Russia is also Europe, and the more we have of this modern element, the better it will be for us. We want to be sure that it is modern, and not merely European."

"That is well said," interposed Radumírov. "The people who talk so glibly about the Asiatic strain in our blood ought to remember that the bulk of our civilization is Aryan, like their own. It is true that we did not descend from the parent stock in the same way; but that is an argument against the classical system, not in favor of it. Western Europe receives Latin and Greek as a natural heritage. These are as necessary to a complete mastery of English, French, Italian, and Spanish, and to a less extent German, as Ecclesiastical Slavonic is essential to a thorough understanding of the Russian. If we have a classical speech, it is not Latin, and not Greek, but Sanskrit. We are an independent branch of the Aryan race. Why endeavor to thrust us into the clothing of the western nations?"

“ Well, they want us to be definitely Europeanized,” observed Neroda, with sarcasm.

“ Europeanized, indeed ! ” muttered Varvára Maxímovna. “ We are already too European to suit our masters.”

“ A clear piece of official inconsistency through which the cloven hoof peeps,” commented Buláiev. “ With one stroke of the pen they tell us we are to be assimilated to Europe ; with the next they shorten our modern language programme in order to make room for Latin and Greek ! ”

“ What would you have ? ” asked Neroda, in a tone of banter. “ Is n’t it through the modern languages that our students get all this nonsense about freedom of thought, constitutional governments, liberty of the press, rights of the individual, and so forth and so forth ? Nothing like a dead tongue for keeping a man’s mind occupied ! ”

A burst of laughter followed this sally. Then Tanya spoke. “ Yes,” she said, “ and when they tell us that we need the classics, like the other races, I deny it for them, and I deny it still more for us. Ages have passed since the ancient books were written ; the writers of them are utterly out of sympathy with our modern modes of thinking. Since they lived, twenty sciences, of which they knew nothing, have sprung into existence. Will any one tell us that men not yet aware of the revolution of the earth around the sun and of the

circulation of the blood are competent to be our instructors ? ”

The girl looked at Forsyth for an instant, as if the question were addressed to him. “ Was not the West,” he ventured, “ with all its sciences, brought up on just that kind of intellectual pabulum ? ”

“ True,” was her quick rejoinder ; “ and how much the progressive West was kept back by just that form of hindrance cannot be adequately estimated. We need the West, by all means ; but in calling it to our side, we do not want the scholasticism of its Middle Ages, any more than we want its feudal system, its class hatreds, its degradation of the poor and toiling, its physical tyrannies, its despotisms over the mind. Let it give us all that it has of new and great, and we will receive its bounty open-handed. But no mediæval cloister for our schoolroom, even with such classical companions as Plato, Cicero, or Demosthenes. A thousand times No ! Give us rather the pure atmosphere of modern knowledge, with Humboldt, Virchow, Comte, Tyndall, Darwin, and Herbert Spencer for our guides. Is it for our young race to repeat all the blunders of the past, when the latest results of science are within its reach ? Let us stand beneath the open vault of heaven, with the modern spirit for our guide, with all life around us, with perfect freedom to investigate it ; and then let it carry us whithersoever it will ! ”

Tanya spoke with warmth and force, for she was deeply interested. As the girl looked up, she saw the earnest eyes of the stranger fixed upon her, and noticed in his face an expression of admiration mingled with surprise. The absorbed gaze manifestly embarrassed her, for with heightened color she hastened to the adjacent room, wherein Assya had just awakened.

The discussion now became general. Some of the exiles told of the harsh treatment meted out to certain professors who had ventured to express their disapproval of the classical system; others illustrated the temper of its promoters by recounting stories of students who had been exiled for disloyalty to the new educational scheme. All agreed that it was the scope given to the study of the natural sciences which had encouraged a "dangerous" independence of thought, and that it was this tendency which classicism was designed to suppress.

Platónov listened to this later talk with a languid interest. He spoke but rarely. Since first looking at Tanya he had an idea on his mind without being able to consciously formulate it to himself. Through the open doorway he could see the girl watching over the crib of the sleeping child. There was no light in the bedchamber, but a beam from the lamp in the guest's room lit up the half-bent figure as it sat there silhouetted

against the darkness. The stranger noted the symmetrical curve of the head, with its coil of hair gathered into a knot at the nape of the neck, the graceful lines of the body, the modest pose. Yet it was the beautiful profile that riveted his attention. Ever and anon he turned uneasily to look at it, and as often turned away with a kind of disappointment, as if some secret had evaded him. It was only when he reached his room at midnight that his mental perplexity had relief, for now one clear thought rose above every other. Where had he seen that profile before?

CHAPTER XI

A DREAM OF FREEDOM

(From Tanya's Diary)

DEC. 20. — The other evening Varvára Máxímovna introduced us to a new guest, — one Vádím Alexándrovich Platónov, who is traveling to Moscow. We had a social gathering of the exiles in his honor, and exchanged notes on all the subjects that lie near our hearts. Varvára Máxímovna, with her customary enthusiasm, had told me I should find him very handsome; but I was impressed more by his dignity and serious thoughtfulness than by anything in his appearance, — more by his graceful bearing and polished manners than by the unmistakable attractiveness of his features. He is manly, but also gentle. One feels soothed in his presence. I did not notice this at first, for I was rather embarrassed to meet him; yet afterwards, when he and I talked together, I became aware of this soothing influence, and knew that it calms one like an anodyne. He has been abroad, and knows western Europe, or, at any rate, parts of it. What an experience! I heard him converse in French, German, and Italian while we

were together on the first evening ; maybe he is acquainted with other languages. As for his ideas, —how strong and rational they are ! though he does not speak often, preferring to listen. Perhaps I shall know more of him and them. Yet why do I write so much concerning a stranger ? After all, what am I to Hecuba ?

Jan. 4. — To-day Varvára Maxímovna proposed a sleigh ride, and half a dozen of us spent three hours in bright sunshine, keeping to the river as far as P——, then returning by the road. I had Buláiev for companion ; Varvára Maxímovna went with Forsyth. How exhilarating it all was ! —the flying snow, the cries of the drivers, the ringing of the horses' hoofs on the ice, our own merry exclamations ; best of all, the fresh impressions and quickened thoughts ! What joy it was to feel one's self let loose, as it were ! Indeed, there were moments in which my spirits ran high, until it seemed as if I could have embraced everybody. Well, we talked — I and Buláiev — as much as the cold would let us. A strange, earnest, somewhat reserved man I found him, with a strong sense of duty, and a careful tenderness for Varvára Maxímovna that shows itself in a hundred ways. It was interesting, for example, when we reached the station house, to see how, after assisting me to alight, he ran to the sleigh carrying his wife and hastened to help her out before Mr. For-

syth could even leave his seat. It sometimes occurs to me that he is not as happy as he might be, though this may be no more than a fancy of mine. In all ways a pleasant journey, yet we paid for it with saddest impressions on our return. Assya having complained of cold, our party stopped near a small hut by the roadside that she might go in and warm herself. An old woman, busy in the yard, bade us enter. I, Buláiev, and Assya went in: the rest waited in the road. We had to stoop in order to make our way into the hut through its low doorway. For a moment or two nothing could be seen; by and by we discerned a stove, a rude wooden table, a bench, and a couple of rickety chairs. Then I became aware of a pair of eyes that shone at us through the darkness like those of some wild animal, and finally could make out the misshapen figure of a boy sitting on a bench. To see so distorted a creature ever so dimly—the wan, pinched face and its hungry look, the swollen head with its matted hair, the wolfish gleam of the eyes that followed our every movement—was to feel one's heart sink in agony. When I offered to the poor starveling a few of the cakes which Buláiev had bought for Assya, he snatched them from me and ate with a ravenous eagerness that made me shudder. It was while I was pitying that victim of life's injustice—wondering how by any mockery men can talk

of human destiny being self-controlled — that the mother returned from gathering wood, and told us her story. It was interrupted only by the half-maniac lad, who moved his head from side to side, muttering something which no one of us could understand. The woman had lost her husband a year before during a river accident while the man was trying to earn money as a boat-hauler. Left helpless with a sickly boy, — her relatives living in the “government” of Kherson, too far away to give aid, — she depended for means of sustenance in the good season upon odd jobs in the fields; in snow-time she lived on the sympathy and charity of people not much, if at all, higher in worldly circumstances than herself. This little episode, commonplace as it was, straightway set me to thinking about misery in general; and again it came into my mind how little to blame the mass of the people are for the hard conditions of their existence, and for all the evils that result from those conditions. Is not city life still worse? I never realized how wretched it may sometimes be until I read Dostoiévsky’s “Poor People.” Here was a revelation from the deeps of life, — the plummet that first sounded for me those profundities of human misery through which till then I had walked as one blind. Before that, as child, scholar, student, I had, I think, never truly lived; that book awakened me to life. As a story — if a

series of letters can be called a story — it interested me little. What seized me, as I read, was the humiliation, the suffering, — dire, heart-rending, — that breathed from every page. Never before had I realized the debt of sympathy and help which I owe to the wretched and the poor. Now I saw why I could never be truly happy in the pursuit of my own ends alone; I now realized that to live healthily I must do something, however little, to relieve the misery around me. Then for a moment I was fired with the thought of going down among these neglected, abandoned, oppressed classes — (for the fortunate always oppress the unfortunate, whether they will it or not) — and toiling for their good, giving myself as teacher and helper without thought of self. Poor Dyévushkin!¹ — thou art the type of all our “humiliated and outraged.” Would that I could strike off the chains of thy slavery, and make thee truly free forever!

Jan. 6. — Vádim Alexándrovich spends with us much of his time. He and Mr. Forsyth, I and Varvára Maxímovna, meet often in the afternoon; our long talks keep us busy until Matriona brings in the samovar. The men smoke; Varvára Maxímovna knits; I usually come in with the book I happen to be reading. Yesterday we spoke of the condition of the peasants, in whom Vádim

¹ The hero of *Poor People*.

Alexándrovich is greatly interested; he asked questions about them, to which all of us gave answers. Vádim Alexándrovich spoke also of Siberia, of prisons, of exiles, and of many things that were to me of deep import. How indignant he is when injustice is done, and how deeply he sympathizes with suffering! How his eyes flash when he is moved! As he speaks, he looks at all of us in turn, — with a broad impartiality, as it were, — and yet it seems sometimes that he appeals for a special attention to me. His voice sounds softer when it is I whom he addresses, though that may be only a fancy: he has known me so short a time! To-day an incident happened. In the morning I wrote to Sonya, — a long letter. Then I took it to the post. The building stands at the end of a narrow thoroughfare which is often filled with sleighs. Walking along the wooden parapet, I saw that a driver, in endeavoring to get through the crowd, had drawn his vehicle upon the parapet. Another *izvóshchik* was at the same moment endeavoring to move to the front, and the two vehicles became interlocked. At the sight of this accident the other drivers began shouting and gesticulating to one another; then the frightened horses reared and plunged, until the whole square in front of the post-office building was a scene of seemingly inextricable confusion. As for me, there I stood stock-still, letter in hand, despairing

of being able to pass, and not at all sure that some injury to myself might not result, when over the heads of the horses and beyond the vehicles I saw Vádim Alexándrovich advancing with a quick step. Motioning to me with his hand to keep perfectly still, he stooped, and, grasping the framework of one of the interlocked sledges, lifted it completely out of its entanglement with the other carriage. Taking the horse by the bridle, he guided it to the front, there setting it free to go its course. The second sleigh was liberated in the same way; then by deft manipulation of other bridles, with quiet but firm words addressed to the drivers, order was quickly restored, a space was cleared, and I could once again freely go my way. How grateful I was to him! Yet I fear I thanked him in but sorry terms, with much shyness. On his face there was a responsive smile, accompanied by a deprecating gesture that seemed to say I was giving him credit for what, after all, was the most trifling service imaginable. Of course, I asked him to remain with me until I reached home. He explained that he had just posted a letter to some acquaintance in Switzerland, and had got half a dozen paces from the door of the building when he noticed the confusion among the sleighs, and saw me standing embarrassed and in peril. We walked back over the crisp snow, and with his tall, strong form

beside me, I quickly forgot the danger. Nor did I seem to feel the cold: my heart was beating fast.

Jan. 9. — I am again working steadily at my Dante. Yesterday I reached the end of the *Ínferno*, and Vádim Alexándrovich asked me for my opinion. I gave it freely. Much as I enjoyed the literary quality of the poem, — (is not that expected of us all?) — I was none the less shocked by some of the horrors which it depicts. It may be childish to complain of a hell for being hellish; yet methinks a man of genius must be realist to an extreme when he can describe these diabolical torments without bursting forth into unmeasured indignation against the alleged author of them. Of course, the people of Dante's time were not advanced enough to feel such indignation; nor was the poet himself, rich as must have been his mental dower, intellectually qualified for revolt against a conception of God and divine retribution that prevailed all through the Middle Ages. All the same, it is not for us to judge a hell of that type from their point of view, nor ought we to read this beautiful poem wholly with the intellect rather than also with the heart. Platónov, who had only a very general knowledge of Dante, agreed with me in much of this; he also remarked that a view of hell like that contained in the *Ínferno* might assist people to tolerate a political

despotism by convincing them of its justice. I suggested that people who had vindictive rulers were all the more ready to believe in a revengeful Deity; he rejoined that the thought of the revengefulness would no doubt be held by such people to justify the vindictiveness. We talked further on this subject for a while; then Platónov spoke of his plans. In that rich, musical voice of his that rose little higher than a whisper, he confided to me his wishes and hopes. He feels, with a sort of grief, the intellectual inertia of the people. Behind every peasant and workman he sees centuries of acquiescence in autocratic government; and deep studies in social evolution have shown him that mental habits are not to be changed in a few months of personal exhortation by propagandists, however devoted or well-informed. It is, nevertheless, through unwearied effort at popular enlightenment that he believes the result will finally be reached; and while he hardly expects the change to come in his lifetime, he is willing to give himself. We sat near the front window; the short winter day drawing to a close suffused us with its dying flame. The light of inspiration was in his face, and his eyes, fixed on me, swam with enthusiasm. Like one of the seers of old he seemed; he talked on from a full heart. To think of him confiding all this to me! Yes, he trusts me, and I almost dare to feel proud of

him. He is guided by his ideals. He looks to the future. He has faith in men. He believes in himself. He must succeed! I told him this, and he was grateful.

Jan. 13. — I have been re-reading Sonya's last letter to me, and have fallen to wondering once more, as she and I did in the old days, regarding the problem of immortality. Somewhere a modern scientist has said that he was most sure of the future life when his mind was clearest. With me, the belief in immortality seems to rise in strength only as my reasoning powers grow inactive or suffer themselves to be obscured by the emotions. Not for an instant have I ceased to regard this belief as in the highest degree natural, — nay, it is a disappointment to doubt, severe beyond expression. *Æons* of life could not satisfy the desire I have to learn and know *ohne Ende und ohne Ende!* How ardently have I not longed for the eternity that in childhood I thought would be mine as a matter of course. Yet it is not in the bright morning, when the realities of things pour in upon us, still less at midday, when human energy reaches its zenith, that one indulges in these soft and selfish dreamings. It is rather in the dusk or late evening, when the sun has borne away one's mental resolution, — when the languid flow of the blood, and the weariness of the flesh, fill one's imagination with shapes and shadows. It

is in the Night, the Nocuous, — the time of darkness, of stillness, of danger, and Fear, — that religious fantasies are born. Hence I have grown resigned to the thought that I, too, shall one day cease to be. For if once for an eternity in that direction there was no “I,” why should not the same “I” have a like term in this direction! Why, moreover, should any rational human being whose life has been bounded on the one side think it so great a hardship to have it equally limited on the other? Is there, then, no immortality? I am no philosopher, yet it seems to me that science has already answered this question by showing man to be immortal by his very organic succession, so that each generation of human beings, by transmitting its type to its successors, lives again in them. Everything is immortal, is it not? save the personal consciousness of the individual, and that is not transmitted because each of us must have special experiences that are unlike the experiences of all others. Do not parents really and truly live in their children? It is undoubtedly true, as I admitted to Vádim Alexándrovich, that even the most rational of us tend to go back to the old beliefs. There are moods in which the scientific way of looking at these things fades quite out of sight. The old beliefs then reassert their sway. Nor is this any cause for regret. Our new knowledge of the universe is but a thin veneer laid

on quite recently: it covers, without always hiding, the vast mass of ideas, beliefs, superstitions, so long held by our ancestors. Is it any wonder that our grasp on something so recently acquired should sometimes seem uncertain and fluctuating? Is it strange that, in spite of our best efforts, the old nature, organized by long centuries of human living and thinking, should now and then reassert itself? The real wonder, if there be any, is that rational ideas regarding the world and life should be possible at all.

Jan. 14. — Do not parents really and truly live in their children? I thought of this to-day, and tried to catch myself in some gesture that might remind me of them. In place of the gesture, I recalled the earliest associations of my childhood; I lived over delicious moments spent with those who are no more. And now it all comes back to me again. The day is bright, and the warm sunshine bathes my forehead; my heart throbs joyfully; there are bird-cries, just as joyful, all around me; yonder a troop of lads let loose from school at midday fill the air with their merriment. I am standing by the side of a wide-spreading tree, stretching out my tiny hands towards the rosy-cheeked peaches that hang from every branch. Most of them are out of my reach, and I am in despair. Suddenly a tall boy draws near and lifts me high in his strong

arms. I seize the nearest branch and give it a pull that sends the fruit in a shower to the green-sward below, along which spots of light and shade are chasing each other. Eagerly I seize the fruit, and then — all is a blank. I am five years old, sitting daintily dressed indoors to receive the congratulations of relatives and friends, for it is my birthday. Before me stands a tall, well-built, robust-looking figure, — the face has rather severe outlines; the eyes are deeply set, the luxuriant beard streaked with gray. Yet he speaks to me with a gentle voice; with a caress he lays before me his present, — a beautifully-bound book filled with pictures. Then again the mist of the past settles down, and I see my childhood only at intervals through breaks in the veil. Most clearly given of all is the vision of my mother. Well I remember her every lineament, — the small, shapely hands and feet, the graceful, slender figure, the noble poise of the head and dignified bearing; above all, that radiant beauty of countenance which no sorrow could ever dim. Perhaps our ideal of Christ is Russian, and unlike every other; yet she answered to it when a girl, if mortal ever did, though in womanhood her face grew more like that of the Madonna. Was it strange that the painter artist who took her for his model told his friends of the prodigy he had found, — of the soft outlines of her classic, oval face, with its smooth, velvet-like skin;

of those brown eyes, soft, yet deep and luminous, set in a forehead as exquisitely moulded as if it had been of chiseled marble; of the wavy black hair, in whose flowing tresses the beautiful body could completely hide itself, — a beauty irresistible, and yet pervaded, perhaps intensified, by the quiet, gentle melancholy that touched every beholder? Ah, me! to be beloved of such a mother was happiness indeed! Yet to know the sorrow behind that sad, wistful look, — to feel how cruelly fate had dealt with her to whom even parental tenderness was denied: this mingles a bitter drop with the sweetness of my recollections. Then comes, with overwhelming force, the mystery of it all. Who were my grandfather and grandmother? Did my mother know her parents, their condition and circumstances; and if so, why was she silent? To think of her dying at an age when, had she known and been so minded, it would have been easy for her to leave me at least some word of consolation! Dying, too, with her hopes crushed, her abilities unrecognized! — in the very heyday of life! No wonder that when she passed away I ceased to be the gay, light-hearted, boisterous girl I once was; no wonder that by my friends I came to be accounted thoughtful and serious! Could it well be otherwise? And now a new influence enters my life. I am drawn along by a current I cannot resist. There is music that way, and new light; and oh! a pro-

mise of joy, joy ; yet joy so mixed with sadness — Thou sweet, dearest mother ! if I could only win thee for an hour from off that shore which men call death, the tumult of my soul were stilled, for thou wouldst guide me and help.

Jan. 16.— Last night I had a dream, vivid beyond anything that I can remember. I and he were walking together, far from frost and snow, in some lake-hollowed country, sunny, and yet shadowed with trees. Hand in hand we strolled in the quiet evening, — the rustle of leaves and the tinkle of sheep-bells on this side ; the soft, glassy, zephyr-rippled water on that. A peace ineffable brooded over all things : we too were at peace, happy beyond speaking, — yes, beyond all thought. But suddenly, above the beating of our hearts, there came the noise of a great wind ; and when we looked again, our lake was lashed to fury until its waves rolled high. Beneath us the earth heaved now this way and now that ; afar off we saw cities and forests that rocked, and then were overthrown or submerged ; above, the stars ran to and fro in mad dance through the blackened sky. At last one mighty wave that seemed to touch the vault menaced us, and in that dread moment I clung to him. Then above all else rose the accents dear to my childhood : it was the voice of my mother bidding me to be of courage and good cheer ; and as the elements grew calm again, I feared

no longer, and straightway awoke. Once more I slept, and a sower went forth to sow. I watched him from the heights. He sowed at morning, at midday, in the afternoon, in the evening; at night he laid him down to rest. Through the years he sowed; and as he cast the seed there came helpers like unto him that sowed also until the land was busy with their toiling. Soon the seeds arose which had been sowed, and these waxed and grew through the lapse of time into great trees. So Russia came to be full of whisperings, for the trees were rich in branches and leafy beyond description. But as I watched I beheld a marvel. The trees that I had seen became gradually as men, and moved and wheeled and came together. Then began a mighty march full of music and banners, until the earth grew noisy with the tread of tramping millions, and the sounds of the trumpets awoke every heart to joy. In the van I saw Russia great and strong, a shining star on her forehead; and after her came all the nations of the earth, each in its rightful place. As I drew near to see what was inscribed upon the banners, a glorious word flashed out and dazzled me; and behold! the countless hosts cried it aloud to heaven with a great cry until I could no longer bear the wonder and the majesty of it, and again I awoke.

CHAPTER. XII

THE MIDNIGHT VISIT

“GLAD to see you looking so well,” was Platónov’s greeting as his hostess admitted him. Her eyes sparkled, and there was a pleased smile on her face. He knew that something agreeable had happened. What was it? For a moment or two he was puzzled. Finally the right idea occurred to him.

“Well,” he went on, “and did you succeed in arranging for the *vecherínka*?”¹ He asked this not because he was at all deeply interested in the subject, but only because he knew it had been much on her mind, and because, somehow or other, he felt himself drawn into saying things that would be agreeable to her.

“I was just going to speak to you about it,” was her reply. “Only fancy, Vádím Alexándrovich, a midwinter ball in the provinces; or, at any rate, as near as we can get to one! Who would ever have thought of such a thing? The date is already fixed.”

“Then some one has agreed to entertain the party?” he asked.

¹ Students’ evening party.

“Some one has. We are going to Dr. Neroda’s. Of course you remember the Nerodas, — the dark-complexioned Little-Russian and his vivacious wife.”

“I think I do,” answered Platónov dreamily, though in truth he was thinking of something else. “How many can they provide for?”

“All who care to go. They have a large parlor with adjoining study. The two rooms thrown into one will easily accommodate fifty persons. As not half that number will want to dance, the doctor says he can find place for everybody.”

“Excellent! And is everything settled?”

“Everything.”

“Well, then, I wish you a very pleasant evening.”

A look of pained surprise which she could not conceal passed over the lady’s face. “But you are to be with us, Vádim Alexándrovich?”

Platónov replied with eyes downcast. “No, Varvára Maxímovna,” he said. “I shall be too much occupied. I cannot spare the time.”

“Occupied with what, pray?”

“The fact is, I have some writing to do. I am completing my plans for Moscow. You know I leave E—— in a week or so.”

“So soon as that?” Varvára Maxímovna had suddenly grown pensive.

“Yes; I fear I have remained too long already.”

“What, and will you leave us on such short notice?”

“It really did not occur to me to mention it before. Perhaps I ought to have done so.”

“Indeed you ought. Maybe you leave us so soon because — because we have disappointed you in some way.”

Anybody watching Varvára Maxímovna closely would have noticed that as she said this there was a slight tremor of her pretty under lip. But Platónov did not see it; he was gazing vacantly through the window.

“Do not say that,” he quickly interposed. “Under your hospitable roof my stay has been pleasant beyond expectation. That is perhaps why I have lingered so long.”

The face of the hostess brightened. “All the more reason,” she ventured, “why you should give us as much of your time as possible while you remain. We shall all miss you when you are gone.” As she said this, her eyes were fixed full on the handsome face of her guest.

Platónov felt the delicate flattery of this appeal more than he cared to admit, even to himself; and though aware of his popularity among the exiles, he modestly shrank from accepting the invitation on that ground.

“Well,” he began, after a moment or two of reflection, “I shall want to spend another evening

with our friends before my departure, and I may perhaps as well take the opportunity you offer me as any other. During the remainder of the week I shall be too busy to see them, — that is, together.”

“I am glad you will come,” she said.

They sat a little while without speaking. Varvára Maxímovna twirled a short length of twine round her finger, — one of those trivial occupations which people fall into when the mind is deeply engaged. Platónov gazed dreamily through the window. He was revolving in his mind the details of his proposed work in Moscow, she gloomily looking forward to the humdrum life which now again menaced her with its vacant interests and empty cares.

“So you are going in a week,” she said at last, “and to Moscow. You don’t know, Vádim Alexándrovich, how I envy you!”

Platónov fixed an inquiring gaze on her face.

“I am quite in earnest,” she went on. “Yes, and if you only knew what torture it is to sink inch by inch into this provincial quagmire, I think you would pity me. There was a time when I, too, looked forward to a grand work in life. Like you, I had great ideas; like you, a hope and courage that seemed boundless. Then, everything smiled on me. I had only to venture forth to win the world. Now, it is all gone, — irretrievably lost!”

“Do not say that, Varvára Maxímovna,” interrupted the visitor.

“No,” she continued, not noticing the interruption, “there is nothing for me to look forward to. Absolutely nothing! Oh, to pass away as a failure is bad enough, but to stagnate morally and physically and still live, — that is worse than death itself!” As the woman spoke, her voice grew more and more husky, and at last fell almost to a whisper. When she had finished, she buried her head in her hands.

Platónov pitied her profoundly. He knew something of her desponding character; he saw that she suffered intensely. But what could he say at such a juncture? Consolation, even the most delicately worded, would be quite out of place. And yet as a friend he could not remain silent.

“Varvára Maxímovna,” he gently said, “it is not for ourselves alone that we live: we are needed by others. For people who have ideas, you know, the world is full of work. Why, then, should you despair, — you who are still young, and on the very threshold of life? Of course you are in the provinces, but even in the provinces there is good to be done; and heaven knows how much more need of it there is than in the great cities. True, you have ignorant, superstitious, old-fashioned people around you; but in just such a surrounding is the field in which a woman of your

talents may reap a rich harvest. To change the ideas of this commonplace humanity, — to leaven it with some of the germs of our new knowledge, — here is an opportunity that might fire the most aspiring ambition. Why won't you try, Varvára Maxímovna? Think," he went on, "of what Véra Pávlovna¹ did with her associations of working-women! Some small beginning of that kind" —

"No," she broke in emphatically, raising her face, on which there were traces of tears; "that would not suit me. I could not put my heart into it. In fact, I do not believe that society can be reformed by coöperative working-women's shops. It was possible for Véra Pávlovna to succeed in such an enterprise, for she loved and was beloved. When one is supremely happy, as she was, the most difficult task becomes easy. In my case, alas! what is there" —

Varvára Mavímovna paused abruptly. She had uttered the last two sentences with trembling lips; now her voice became inaudible; her head fell; and in the fit of wild sobbing that succeeded, she seized the hands of Platónov, as if to plead at once for his sympathy and consolation.

The propagandist's first impulse was to rise, but before he could do so, the door opened, and Assya came in, followed closely by Tanya. What the

¹ The heroine of Chernishévsky's novel, *What is to be Done?*

girl first saw as she entered remained long in her memory. The next instant Varvára Maxímovna — her eyes red with weeping — had resumed her sitting posture, while Platónov was standing near her with an embarrassed look on his face. The painful mental tension of all three was broken by Tanya, who, feeling that she had intruded, uttered a commonplace remark and withdrew. Next Varvára Maxímovna swept from the room with a countenance on which the marks of grief and chagrin were clearly written. Little Assya alone remained, winning and sprightly as ever in her attentions to the propagandist, yet quite unable to restore him to his normal mood. For the rest of the morning the women were invisible. Tanya had retired to her bedroom; and there, as she lay stretched on her couch, the thoughts chased one another through her heated brain with an almost delirious swiftness.

It was late in the afternoon when the last sleighs reached the large, one-story house on Náberzhnaya Street; yet the *soirée* planned by Varvára Maxímovna — for the majority of the guests, at any rate — fulfilled every expectation. Dr. and Madame Neroda, receiving the visitors with open-armed hospitality, showed them a genuine kindness and simple affability that won every heart. When Forsyth arrived, he found the rooms

already filled with a gay throng, and saw through an open doorway into the banqueting-hall where, on long tables, the bountiful repast of the evening had been spread. In an adjoining room Marussia, the hostess, was already at the piano, playing some spirited Little-Russian songs.

Forsyth watched it all with a quiet kind of pleasure. Did it not confirm the view he had so long held of the superior capacity of the Slav for social enjoyment? Yet his chief, his dominant thought was Tanya, and he looked for her coming with eagerness. He had not seen her for days; he hoped the *soirée* might give him an opportunity for one of those *tête-à-tête* that, even in remembrance of them, were still the brightest spots in his existence. Ah, yes, like a string of priceless pearls he had stored them up in his memory, — jewels to be counted over one by one as a miser counts his gold, and yet at each counting to be regretted because they were so few. How, then, was his cause progressing? Was there still hope? He dared not — he would not — confess it even to himself. He had, indeed, a pained spectator, watched the girl's growing entanglement with Platónov; yet he could not bring himself to believe that hers was more than a passing fancy not destined to have serious result. Several reasons seemed to justify the conclusion. First of them was the fact that the propagandist would be gone

from E—— in a few days, never, in all probability, to return. If the man had cast any glamour over her, — as men sometimes did over susceptible young women, — the influence would surely pass away when the source of it was removed. Then there was the exceeding unlikelihood, suggested by the circumstances of both, that any permanent relation could arise between them. Platónov's calling was in many ways perilous : he could not well have any settled place of residence ; he might be discovered and arrested at any moment. Forsyth still wished the propagandist success in his mission ; he admired his courage, above all, the conspicuous unselfishness of the man. Thus far the schoolmaster could go in his friendship. But could he rightly wish for Tanya the discomfort, the hardship, the danger of an existence so unsettled as that would inevitably be ? Like many other men in similar situations, Forsyth glossed over the promptings of self-interest with a fine altruistic veneering ; and the upshot of his mental sophistry was a determination that when Platónov had gone he would speak, — yes, speak for himself. For in the conflict of feelings that had stirred his breast, something of that delicacy which had so long kept his passion silent was beginning to be worn away, while the now certain knowledge of the rivalry of another roused the English spirit within him to a new self-assertiveness.

Nor was the schoolmaster — “professor,” the exiles had begun to call him — the only visitor at Dr. Neroda’s who seemed to have relapsed from the gayeties of the evening into a vein of thoughtful introspection. Not far away sat Platónov, smoking, his reflective mood very clearly written in his handsome features. True enough that when Madame Neroda brought him his glass of tea, he brightened up somewhat, accompanying his little speech of thanks with a grateful smile. Yet the affable hostess had no sooner left him than the old expression returned. He seemed to be awaiting a visitor : every now and then his eyes sought the door. Just as he had replaced his glass on the tray, Tanya came in. Deftly picking her way among the guests, the girl, quite unaware of his presence, took a seat not far from the propagandist. Platónov was at her side in a moment. Holding her hand with a firm, strong pressure, he eagerly inquired after her health. She blushed deeply. A single glance at his honest, serious face sufficed to dispel the troubled thoughts of the morning, while the soft, musical tones, whose every cadence she knew so well, drew the girl with a new intoxication. No wonder that from the instant of their meeting they were lost to the social life around them : for though between these two there had never yet been a word of love, it had already become a pain for one to lose sight of the other ;

and as the time was now so short, they instinctively remained together, exchanging words that were to be long treasured up in the memories of both. Nor did the closing feature of the *soirée* separate them. At first their hearts had seemed too full for gayety, yet Marussia's music quickly dispelled the seriousness of their thought, and ere the strains of the last waltz had died away, Platónov took his companion by the hand, gently raising her to his side, and led her, nothing loth, through the whirling circles of the dance, her face shining near his with the radiance of an unearthly delight which she had never known before.

Varvára Maxímovna glanced significantly at the happy couple, then turned to go. As she rose, her eye met that of Forsyth. In little more than a whisper that sounded hoarsely in his ear, she asked the teacher to accompany her home. Forsyth, who had seen Buláiev retire more than two hours before, was only too ready to grant her request, for the same arrow that now rankled in the bosom of Varvára Maxímovna had stirred his own soul to its very depths. Half unconsciously he helped the woman into the sleigh, and two patients stricken with the same disease, yet neither knowing aught of the other's malady, sped home through the darkness.

Poor Forsyth! That night he forgot himself. Prudence, friendship, philosophy, — all were flung

away in the mental turmoil of the moment. His brain seethed and bubbled, — his very thoughts seemed on fire. Something like that he had felt long before when a boy. He had fallen passionately in love with a simple village girl, and on her entreaty had attended her to some rustic festival at which the young people indulged in games. In one of these it became the right of the lad privileged by success in the play to choose a maiden from the ring and kiss her. Shy and reserved to an extreme, Forsyth had refrained from taking part; whence it happened that his companion was claimed by a country lad, who snatched the forfeit from her cheeks without a moment's hesitation. How the heart of the little onlooker sank in agony at the sight of the desecration! and then how it flamed with indignation at the violated sanctity of her whose whole personality had become inexpressibly sacred to him, — so sacred that in the loftiness of his boyish passion he had never once dared to touch her with his lips! No wonder that when he walked home silent by her side, he had felt divided from her by mountains and seas! How it all came back to him now, — a cameo from his boyhood, set in the vivid green of that English summer long, long before! Thus also it was to-day: again the awful distance, but with it, too, the deep sense of wrong, the feeling of resentment, — yea, in the burning jealousy of the moment,

the very fires of hell itself! Well enough he knew, even while under its control, that all this would pass; yet while its power was strong upon him, he suffered intensely. Quickly he aided Varvára Maxímovna to descend at the great gates in the Známenskaya, and then sought his own quiet lodging, knowing well as he went that the night was not for sleep nor the morning for slumber.

Varvára Maxímovna hastened to her room. It took but an instant to remove her hat, fur, and boots. Turning down the lamp which had been left burning for her by Matriona, but without further disrobing, she threw herself on the bed, and tried to compose herself to sleep. It was a vain effort. The woman turned uneasily from side to side. In a quarter of an hour the little clock on the mantelpiece struck midnight. The sound seemed to give a new course to her thoughts. She sat up and listened intently. All about her the house was silent, save for the regular breathing of her husband, already fast asleep on his couch in the adjacent room, and the faint respiration that came from the little crib where Assya lay. Outside, the wind moaned fitfully, but the courtyard was still as the grave. The listener knew that the latch of the gate had not been lifted since her own arrival: hence her attitude of expectation. When would they return? Varvára Maxímovna

began to pace the floor of the little room ; from time to time she would press her hand tightly against her burning forehead. It seemed an age of waiting. Then the clock chimed the quarter. Not yet ? Suddenly an idea occurred to the impatient woman. It arose in the very frenzy of a fevered imagination, and yet for the moment it flashed energy, courage, hope, into her despairing soul. In an instant she had thrown over her head and shoulders a large Orenburg shawl, the web-like meshes of which gave a weird expression to a face already ghastly in its pallor. As she turned to go, something between a sigh and a sob smote her ear ; it came she knew not whence, causing her to hesitate ; but a glance showed that Assya and her husband were still fast asleep. Then cautiously and noiselessly she made her way to the side door and opened it. Profound darkness outside, and the snow falling in great, thick flakes ! It was but a few steps to the little house in the courtyard. In the vestibule she paused to shake the snow from her garments, and was about to enter Platónov's room when the door opposite opened. It was Matriona, in one hand holding a candle, with the other shading her eyes from its light. Her sleepy face showed that she had just been awakened. The girl stared inquiringly at the visitor. " I thought it was Vádím Alexándrovich," she said apologetically.

“Are you not asleep yet, Matriona?” rejoined her mistress, impatiently shrugging her shoulders. “Better go to bed at once: you must be up early in the morning, remember.” So saying, Varvára Máxímovna passed quickly into her lodger’s room, leaving the domestic gazing after her from the vestibule.

Within, all was confusion. On the table, which was strewn with papers and books, stood a lighted lamp. The broad window ledges contained some unbound volumes of foreign publications. Two or three valises and traveling bags, packed and empty, lay on the floor, together with a large trunk strapped ready for removal. Noting these significant signs of preparation, Varvára Máxímovna made her way to an armchair and sank into it, now weak physically after the fatigues of the day, but none the less mentally strong with a purpose which, in the heated atmosphere of the little room, flushed her cheeks and caused her eyes to sparkle with an unnatural brilliance. That purpose was to see Platónov: to know her fate once for all; to hear from him who held her future in his hands what that future was to be. Long enough she had vegetated, had dragged along, a weary, disappointed woman, her empty, miserable existence; long enough she had buried her talents in the monotonous, humdrum round of provincial life; long enough she had beaten the

wings of her passionate nature against the prisoning bars of family duty! Oh, how odious, how insufferable, all this had become to her! Now at last her chance had come. She loved for the first time, — loved so madly that life itself in the balance with her one desire had become as nothing. And why should she not yield to its promptings, — she whom education had fashioned for all the romance of love, as nature had destined her for all its delights? Yea, to the last drop in the foaming cup of pleasure would she quaff life; and if ruin followed, then let it come, — she would at least have lived.

Varvára Maxímovna was too absorbed in her reflections to hear the banging of the gate. But she caught the sound the hall door made in opening, and knew that a second later she would be in his presence. It was indeed Platónov. Coming in hurriedly, he had closed the door of the room before seeing her. When he turned to approach the table, a half-puzzled, half-startled expression came into his face. It took him but an instant to recognize the enmeshed features of his hostess. “You here, Varvára Maxímovna, and at this late hour? What has happened?”

The woman said not a word. Casting aside her Orenburg shawl, she advanced to meet him; yet she had not taken two steps before her face turned deathly pale. He saw her stagger, and just had

time, by extending his arms, to save her from falling.

“What is the matter?” he now asked in tones of alarm. “You are seriously ill, Varvára Maxímovna!”

“No — no!” she protested hysterically. The next instant, before he had time to prevent it, she had thrown her arms round his neck and was raining frenzied kisses upon his cheeks, his forehead, and his lips. “Don’t resist me!” she cried. “I love you, my darling. I cannot live without you! You are my joy, my life, my soul, my idol, my divinity! A word, and I will follow you to the end of the world! Vádim, *golúbchik*,¹ look upon me, — speak! I cannot let you go, dearest!”

The delirious energy of this sudden embrace, in which all the woman’s pent-up feelings found outlet, roused Platónov to the gravity of the situation; yet from the first he had realized how vain would have been any attempt to release himself. He could only wait till the paroxysm of passion should show signs of exhausting itself. Little by little Varvára Maxímovna’s delicate hands unclasped themselves, but she made her passionate appeals with undiminished fervor; amid sobs and tears, she continued to lavish on him caresses which he had neither the right to receive nor the will to return.

¹ Little dove.

In truth, he was profoundly affected. The way in which the suffering woman nestled to him, like some wounded bird that seeks safety in the arms of a deliverer, cut him to the quick. She was wild and wayward, — that he knew, — yet he pitied her from the bottom of his heart. Being himself the innocent cause of her troubles, he felt that it was only with tenderness that he could leave her passionate appeals unanswered, and only with indulgent sympathy that he must call her back to the imperious duties of mother and wife.

She seemed to divine what was passing in his mind, for she asked suddenly, clinging to his hands, “Do you love me?”

“My dear Varvára Maxímovna,” he replied, stroking her blonde head, “if ever woman commanded my esteem and respect, that woman is yourself; and if ever, in time of misfortune, you should need my help, call me by so much as a word, and I shall hasten to your side, to do for you as would be done by the best of brothers, the dearest of friends. But I am afraid you are not well to-night.” Again he stroked her head.

“Not well!” she repeated, her eyes flashing a little wrathfully. “Oh, Vádim, speak no more of esteem and respect, if you would not mock me. It is love that I give you, — love that I need. Do you not love me, then?”

“Varvára Maxímovna,” he began again, “you

do not know how miserable you make me! You offer me all this wealth of affection, and I am not worthy of it."

"Then you do not love me," she ejaculated, with vague comprehension of his meaning. "Oh, you do not love me!" With a passionate cry that wounded him more than words could have done, she burst into tears. A prey himself to the most conflicting emotions, he could say nothing, — he could only stroke once more the soft blonde head.

In a little while there came a pause in the storm of grief. She had nestled to him like a wayward child, and now, looking up, with tear-stained face, pleading and eloquent, she asked, "Vádim, *golúbchik*, you don't love me now; but you may learn to love me later? Will you not? Do leave me that hope at least. Promise! It will give me strength to live."

This tried him more than all. He looked at her a moment or two before speaking. "My dear," he said at last, "you are too excited to think farther of these things to-night. To-morrow, when you are calmer, we can talk them over. Now you need rest and sleep — so much!"

He had no sooner said this than her penetrating look met his. It seemed as if she would search his soul to the depths. "Vádim," she began again, "do tell me that I may hope. Am I so

indifferent to you that you would conceal it from me — merely out of compassion? Promise me, dearest!” Again her head was nestling in his breast, and with her pliant arms she clung to him.

But he raised her now with a decisive, though gentle effort; and when she saw his serious, steady gaze turned full on her face, her gray eyes shrank half shyly, half fearfully from his, as if an instinct warned her that her sentence was at hand.

“My dear friend,” he went on, in a grave voice, “I dare not deceive you, though it is torture for me to tell you the truth. I have no right to promise. Forgive me!”

Only these simple phrases, and then it all flashed upon the jealous woman like a revelation. The trouble which she had merely feared, as a more or less remote possibility, was now upon her in its most awful form. It was he who had told her this! She could not look at him again. She turned and fled.

CHAPTER XIII

LOVE AND JEALOUSY

TANYA awoke early and with a start. At first her mind was a blank ; then quickly the events of the previous evening rose in her recollection, and with them came a warm, resurgent flush that suffused her cheeks and neck. The girl's heart began to beat fast ; yielding to her feelings, she hid her blissful face among the pillows. As she did so, the rich brown hair fell apart and covered her ; and thus she lay in long and mute enjoyment of her happiness.

Yes, she was happy. It seemed, indeed, that she was supremely happy. It was not so much that Platónov had accompanied her home, for they had spoken little on the way. She remembered rather that his strong arms had held her near to him in the dance ; that his eye had sought hers more than once during the evening with a deep, telltale expression ; and that he had kissed her hand as he left her at the door, — a shy, hasty, reverent, and yet a true lover's kiss ; — a kiss that told her budding womanhood all that her heart was thirsting to know. Hours after her good-by to

him, she still felt the spot on her hand which his lips had touched. Had she not reason enough to be happy? and was it wonder that, as she thought of it all, her pulses should beat more quickly than ever, or that the color in her cheeks should grow deeper and deeper?

When Tanya reached the breakfast-table, she found Buláiev sipping his last glass of tea, and heard from him, as he turned to go to his office, that Varvára Maxímovna was not well enough to leave her room. Assya had just finished her cup of milk, and was now in the next room playing with her dolls. A few minutes later, Matriona came in to take away the samovar. The normal expression of the domestic's face — plump almost to fatness — was one of heavy good humor: this morning it had a look of self-satisfied mystery that seemed to tell of some triumphant secret which the girl, while proud of her possession, was only awaiting a favorable opportunity to disclose.

Seeing her own meaning glance met by Tanya's inquiring gaze, Matriona began, "Oh, miss, there are such goings on here, you would scarcely believe!"

"What do you mean?" asked Tanya.

"Well, miss," rejoined the domestic, with a leer, "I don't know how to say it. I suppose it is n't any of my business, though of course I see and hear things, like other people."

“Do speak plainly!” Tanya broke in impatiently.

After looking carefully round to see if they were alone, Matriona approached the girl and whispered, “Do you know? Platónov will be going soon, — perhaps to-morrow.”

“How do you know, Matriona?”

“All his luggage is packed ready, — not a scrap of paper left out.”

“Has Varvára Maxímovna heard of this?” Tanya asked, wondering what could have happened.

“I can tell you something,” the domestic went on, with a sly look in her face. “You must know, miss, — though I would not tell any one else for the world, — that Varvára Maxímovna was with him last night.”

“What are you saying? Last night? Where, pray?”

“Why, in his lodgings. She came after midnight to wait for him. They were together I don’t know how long: I was so tired that I fell asleep.”

Tanya had suddenly turned pale in spite of herself. With a mastering effort at self-recovery, she said: “Matriona, you must have been dreaming. What wild stories are these?”

“May God help me,” quickly retorted the domestic, crossing herself, “if I have told a bit of a lie. It’s all true. I swear it. I saw her come

in after midnight with these very eyes, and I know he followed her, for the door banged, and presently I heard them talking together."

"Well," said Tanya, regaining her composure, "there is nothing remarkable about that. She may have had some business with him. It's very wrong, Matriona, to gossip about such a thing. Be very careful and say nothing more of it, — for your own sake."

"Very well, miss; I'll take care," — the servant lifted the samovar and turned to go, — "but nobody will get me to believe that a married lady has innocent business with a single man after midnight."

The young girl's heart fell as the leering face of the domestic disappeared through the doorway. She felt that an evil blow had been struck: it seemed as if a hurricane, sweeping through the delightful garden of her dreams, had laid waste its choicest flowers. Turn wherever she would, the oppressive weight of Matriona's hideous thought accompanied her until her pulses throbbed and her beating brain threatened to burst. For a while she joined Assya, in search of the distraction which childish games sometimes yield; but her forced participation failed to restore her spirits. Then she took up a book and tried to read, but the letters swam before her eyes, until the printed page began to be moistened with her tears. Finally

she sank into a chair, and gave herself unresistingly to the flood of thoughts that poured in upon her. How bitter it all was! Last night's happiness; his soothing words and encircling arm; his one kiss, that she had treasured up in her memory as a holy thing, — how it all came back to mock her in her affliction! Was there really some understanding between them more than could properly exist between friends, or was the whole story of their midnight meeting the product of a diseased imagination? Yet Tanya could not reason, so deeply was her heart engaged; and so from time to time the proud thought rose within her that she had no claim upon Platónov's affection, and least of all any right to be offended at what he might do or leave undone. Hastily putting on her hat and fur coat, she sought the open air. In earlier days she had found relief from troublous thoughts beneath the open heavens. Why should it not be so now?

A flood of sunshine greeted her as she emerged. It was one of those fair, bright mornings she had sometimes enjoyed in St. Petersburg, — mornings in which winter was almost set at defiance, and the clear, exhilarating, though frosty air seemed to mimic the atmosphere of spring itself. Tanya stepped forth into the laughing day with the energy of an organism that, however great the burden it may have to bear, still has youth on its side.

Briskly she walked along the broad thoroughfares as far as the lines of houses extended; and then, having reached the outskirts of the town, turned into one of the roads that radiate far through the snow plains around E—— until they are lost in the horizon. Her mind was too full to think much of the lapse of time; scarcely observing the snow that whitened around her, she pursued her heedless course as if it were never to end. Yet by and by, the sharp touch of the cold wind recalled her a little to herself. Then the manifest distance of E—— alarmed her, and she turned back.

Just as she had regained the outskirts of the town, a voice called her by name. The girl stopped and trembled. For the moment she had neither the force to reply nor the will to turn away. "Tatiána Vladímírovna," it came again. Making an effort, Tanya slowly lifted her eyes. It was Platónov who stood before her, his serious face bent with a look of anxiety upon hers. There was concern in his tones as he began. "Tatiána Vladímírovna," he said, "I am leaving E—— this very day, and there is so much that I would like to say to you before I go. I did not expect to go so soon as this, but I have come to think it better that I should. In all probability we shall never see each other again." The musical voice trembled slightly, paused an instant, then went on: "I hardly dare to hope. But my happiest

moments have been those spent with you, and the thought of them will also be the happiest of my recollections hereafter. Tatiána Vladímírovna" (and here emotion again betrayed the speaker), "you are young, beautiful, and gifted. Some day there will come one who will offer you his heart, — ay, and not only that, but comfort, safety, everything that makes life worth living; and you will wed him. I wish I were that man. But such dreams, such love, such happiness, are not for me."

Platónov drew his cap deeper over his face and relapsed into silence. Side by side they walked on mechanically. "Not for me," he sadly repeated; "I must be forgotten; and you, Tatiána Vladímírovna, will forget me."

He waited to hear her say something, but she uttered not a word. Then he turned to the pale visage so near his own. Nor did he look in vain; for though Tanya had met him with a reserve which she could not at first overcome, she had only to see her lover, only to hear him speak, to find her doubts and misgivings banished forever. How foolish she had been! Even while he addressed her, she reproached herself bitterly for the over-credulity of her attention to Matriona's gossip. The chief burden of her mental suffering came now from the knowledge of Platónov's early departure. His last sentence touched her deeply; and

when his gaze fixed itself upon her face, he saw that the tears which had started from her eyelids were already beginning, one by one, to roll down the girl's cheeks.

"If it is impossible to forget, Vádím Alexándrovich?" she asked.

"Tanya," he exclaimed, with passionate impetuosity, "give me your hand, and let us go forth into the strife together!"

The girl shook her head sadly, as she gazed at him through her tears. "That cannot be, Vádím Alexándrovich."

Again he looked inquiringly into her face.

"It would be better to hang a millstone round your neck," she went on. "You have a glorious work before you, — a sacred mission. Let no thought of me beguile you from it. That is my supreme wish."

"Then you think it will be easy to bear — this separation — for both of us?" His voice faltered a little.

The girl hesitated before replying. Then, gathering courage, she went on: "I shall think of you — yes, perhaps too often — when you are away; but I could not dare to imperil your chances of success by any unavailing companionship of mine. Were it possible to aid you, nothing should keep me from your side. Not yet are our lives our own; and you, Vádím Alexándrovich, know well

enough that for a soldier on the march a wife is a hindrance, not a help. Is it not so?"

Platónov's silence was more eloquent than any spoken assent could have been. Had he not already compared his sojourn at E—— to a bivouac whose ashes any morning sun might see scattered to the four winds?

"Then we are to be separated," he quietly said at last, with a slow enunciation. "But that will not alter anything between us, Tanya, — will it?"

She stopped suddenly and seized his hand. The tears were now all gone, and in her eyes a new light seemed to shine. "Promise me," she said, fixing them upon him, "that you will never leave me in uncertainty regarding your fate; that if you are ever arrested after you go from me, you will send me word of it, — nay, that if anything happens to disappoint your hopes or change the current of your life, you will share it all with me."

One look from that handsome face would have satisfied her, yet he repeated the assurance with his lips until her eyes flashed in gratitude. Then they walked on, hand in hand, saying little now, but each heart full in its conscious possession of the other. Linked together, though so soon to be parted, they did not notice the darkening sky or feel the deepening cold; and it was only when great irregular flakes began to moisten their faces that the wanderers thought of shelter. Platónov

saw that they had reached the entrance to the thoroughfare in which Dr. Neroda lived. It was but a few steps to the house of their friend, yet before they could reach it, they were struck by the first blast of a blinding storm that filled the air with whirling circles of sleet, hail, and snow.

Platónov quickly drew his companion under the cover of the doorway, and rang. The master and mistress happened to be away visiting; the wrinkled old domestic led them into the study and left them there alone. Seated near each other, they talked now in whispers; and as the gloom from the darkened atmosphere without descended, filling the place with strange shadows, Tanya found that, somehow or other, in the alarm of the moment, she had nestled nearer to him, that his arm already encircled her neck, and that in those ecstasies of their all too brief happiness, she was yielding unresistingly to the wild kisses which his lips were pressing on her face and hair.

Towards evening, when the storm outside had somewhat subsided, a startling piece of news caused Varvára Maxímovna to emerge from her bedroom, which she had not left during the day, and throw herself on the couch not far from Tanya's desk. It was the intelligence, conveyed by Matriona, that Platónov had gone by the post-wagon, and had been accompanied to the station by Tanya and

Buláiev. The soft flame of the lamp diffused a subdued light through the library; Assya, tired out with play, slumbered in Buláiev's armchair, clasping to her breast, over which the luxuriant curls overflowed, her favorite toy, the shaggy goat; in the adjacent room the faint ticking of the cuckoo clock broke the silence. There were dark circles round the woman's eyes as she lay, showing that she needed sleep; yet the lids remained unclosed, and the expression of watchfulness never once left the face.

Varvára Maxímovna seemed to be waiting. When an hour had sped by, the banging of the gate announced that some one had returned. It was Tanya. That the girl had passed through some unusual experience was only too evident. Her face, besides being flushed after the quick sleigh ride from the station, bore the unmistakable traces of tears. The sight of those reddened eyelids stung Varvára Maxímovna to the quick: in a moment the angry tiger of jealousy had awakened in her to new life. Tears shed for him? By what right did she weep over his departure?

"So you saw him off, Tatiána Vladímirovna?" the woman began. "And it is to be a pretty love idyll, something in the style of shepherd and shepherdess, — quite *à la* Virgil, — is it not? Well, you have my congratulations."

"To what do you refer?" asked Tanya, in confusion.

Varvára Maxímovna rose to her feet. "Oh, you do not know? The sweet innocent! No, she does not know! She did not dance with him at the party; she did not go to the station to see him off! All that is a delusion! Perhaps she will say next that she never saw Platónov. Now, Tatiána Vladímirovna," the woman went on, suddenly changing her tone of banter to one of reproach, the rage of which she made not the slightest attempt to conceal, "do you suppose that people are blind? Do you think they cannot see through your tricks? Don't they understand your devilish coquetry? Is n't it plain to any one with half an eye that this idiotic vanity of yours is bringing a good man to his ruin?"

Tanya, who had heard the first burst of this tirade with astonishment, stood looking at the distorted countenance of her hostess without being able to say a word.

But the irate woman had not finished. "To think of you leading him astray, — you, with that doll's face and that empty head of yours; you who know what his life is to be, and how his work will suffer if he is drawn away from it! What is it to you that the happiness of millions may be ruined, if only you can gain an idle gratification for your infernal vanity? Are you idiotic enough to think that you can help him in his labors? Don't you know that he may be arrested at any

moment, and are n't you aware that you yourself may be the cause of his arrest? Oh, you heartless wretch; and yet you stand there glorying in your selfishness!"

Tanya had mentally resolved to let the torrent of reproach run on until it had exhausted itself. To try to stem it would have been folly. Meanwhile she could not help observing, as Varvára Maxímovna paused for breath, "And what if I love him, and what if" —

"You love him? — you silly, giddy, senseless thing? What you call love is unworthy of the name. You profane the word. It is I who love him, — I who would willingly give my life up for him, — yes, and the life of everything that is dearest to me."

Just at this moment, aroused by the loud speech of her mother, but still half asleep, little Assya showed her vague comprehension of the situation by suddenly pleading for her friend. "Oh, mamma, why do you speak so crossly to poor Tanya?" The limpid serenity of the large upturned blue eyes gave added force to the child's plaintive entreaty, but the roused mother refused to be silenced.

"Do you see that child?" she rambled on, — "bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh, — my very heartstrings bound to her, so that you could not touch her without my feeling it? Well, for the man I love, I would sacrifice even her!"

A feeling of profound pity stole into Tanya's heart as, hearing these things, she looked once again upon the angry face of the wretched woman before her. Yet the girl could not bring herself to make any reply. Her eyes fell, and taking between her hands the head of Assya, as it nestled close to her, she caressed its golden locks.

"What, pray, is there in you for such a man to like? Am I not more gifted, more intelligent than you? Perhaps you have beauty! Have you? Well, that is a matter of taste. Men of serious disposition don't pay much attention to that. Besides, there are times when I can be as pretty as you are at your best."

Varvára Maxímovna's assertion had a degree of truth in it; and as she stood there erect, her head proudly lifted, her whole body not without a certain stateliness, even in its paroxysm of rage, she displayed much of the attractiveness that make women beloved of men.

"Now listen, Tatiána Vladímirovna," she went on, "and listen to me well. That man is gone for good,—in all probability you and he will never meet again,—but if ever you ensnare him, you shall join him only over my dead body. Never forget that, for I mean it!"

The woman had clenched her teeth. The last words of her speech smote on the ear of Tanya like the hissing of a serpent. The effort seemed

to exhaust her, for, throwing herself back on the couch, the woman lay there, the light all gone from her eyes, the face turned ashy pale. She did not again look up.

For a moment or two Tanya hesitated. The thought occurred to her that after the first burst of passion was over, Varvára Maxímovna might relent sufficiently to make possible a *modus vivendi* between them. Knowing all the bitterness of the woman's heart, — all the unutterable wretchedness and despair of her mental condition, and with a pity for her that dominated all other feelings, — she would gladly have forgiven her friend. But the prostrate figure gave no sign: the rage had, indeed, burnt itself out, but the hostile will remained.

The girl saw that she had no choice. "Varvára Maxímovna," she began, — her face pale, but her mind made up, — "it would be idle for me to reason with you. I shall tell you only that in my relation to Platónov I know of no fault which could justify these reproaches of yours, or entitle me to lose my own self-respect. As for your threats, they do not concern me, and I know that in making them you have forgotten your own better self. Still, that is not a matter for me to consider now. It should be plain to you that after what you have said, it is impossible for me to remain longer under this roof; and perhaps, even at this

late hour, it is not too late for me to find accommodation elsewhere."

Having spoken thus, Tanya put on her fur coat and cap. Suddenly the door opened. It was Buláiev. Seeing the girl's troubled features and noting the averted face of his wife, he looked inquiringly for a moment at Tanya, then asked slowly, "What is the matter? What has happened? Where are you going so late?"

"I cannot explain anything now," Tanya said, her voice choking with emotion; "but it is impossible for me to remain longer under this roof."

Buláiev instinctively glanced in the direction of his wife. Then his face fell. He understood everything. Not a word of explanation was necessary.

"Very well," he replied, "I shall go with you, to see that you are comfortably settled."

Together they passed out into the open air. It was a clear, cold night: the crisp snow yielded sonorously as they went; far above, hundreds of stars twinkled; the strange creak of the watchman's rattle had already begun.

They walked for a few yards in silence. Then Buláiev, who could no more control his feelings, stopped. Taking her hand in both of his, he said, "My dear girl, I know how cruel she must have been to you. Believe me, she is scarcely responsible. It is all because" — here he paused and drew

a deep breath — “because she is so wretchedly unhappy. Time alone can heal her wounds. But now — now you must forgive her. Will you not, — you who are the soul of generosity?”

Buláiev did not ask in vain ; and that night, in the little bedroom which the Nerodas gladly surrendered to her, Tanya, remembering that “the joy of one must be redeemed at the altar of fate with the suffering of another,” realized how sadly, even bitterly, in her own existence the saying of Nekrásov had been verified.

CHAPTER XIV

ON THE ROAD TO MOSCOW

PLATÓNOV now turned his face towards Moscow. Once again, in his young, yet stormy life, he was to be a Russian of the Russians. Yea, in faring towards the old capital, it seemed that he was really on his way home. And as the dim light of morning stole through the carriage windows, he thought of himself as of a son who, after many years' absence, at last goes on a visit to his old mother. His fondness for her had swelled the months of their separation to years, the years to whole generations, until he sat wondering how she would look, — whether her locks that used to be auburn would now be quite gray, — whether her speech would be distinct as it once was, and — most important of all — whether those kindly eyes that had so often met him with glances of love would recognize the wandering boy on his return. Or so, rather, it might have been. For Platónov had no mother: she died too young for him to remember her. The only mother he knew was the mother who had nurtured his eager youth with the knowledge that was to fit him for the

battle of life, — Moscow herself, the great university centre at which he had been educated, the “white-stone mother city” of the race that in the years of his manhood he so ardently wished to emancipate.

He is meanwhile reminded, by far earlier recollections, of the name originally given him by his father, and of the strange experiences of his boyhood. Platónov was a descendant of the Kromskys, rich landowners in the government of Kherson. Serious reverses had gradually overtaken the family, and on the death of Colonel Kromsky, its head, the possessions were found to be so heavily incumbered by debt as to be already in the hands of the auctioneer. The last chance of salvation for the property now lay — by virtue of an intrigue, the details of which need not be described — in the marriage of the son to a rich merchant’s widow, — a woman who, though fifteen years his senior, looked with favor on his handsome exterior, and longed, with ardent feminine vanity, for an alliance that would ennoble her. Not only had the young man no inclination for the marriage, — he stoutly protested against it; but what the charms of the widow failed to accomplish was at last brought about by the tears and entreaties of his mother. Once her end had been gained, the newly made wife did not scruple to carry into the matrimonial relation all the worldly wisdom of that mercantile

atmosphere in which she had been steeped from her childhood. Knowing well the motives which had prompted the marriage, she determined to keep a tight hand on her purse-strings, and so defeat the plot laid against her private fortune at the same time that she brought the young husband completely under her control. In all this the woman overreached herself. Her refusal to help his family aroused the husband's active disgust, while the subsequent sale of the property, the result of that refusal, gave a bitterness to his feelings that made her society intolerable. It was misfortune enough to have thrown away his life for nothing. To remain now with this middle-aged woman, not only much his inferior both in intelligence and culture, but greedy in disposition, shrewish, hot-tempered, and jealous, would from his point of view have been worse than death itself. Kromsky had the further chagrin of knowing that he had brought his trouble on himself. But he did not hesitate. Obtaining an appointment in the Caucasus under General Vórontsov, he hurried away to join his regiment, leaving his wife to appeal to all the saints to avenge her wrongs. Soon after reaching his destination, the young officer received intelligence that through the death of a rich bachelor uncle he had become the possessor of an extensive and valuable estate. It was now too late to change his plans. He loved more than

anything else the career he had chosen, and was determined to succeed in a campaign which had already made a host of military reputations. This struggle against the desperate mountaineers of the Caucasus, above whom the mystical figure of Schamyl was now looming up, had in it the touch of romance that, for an imaginative temperament and venturesome disposition like his, made its attraction irresistible. Plunging into the thick of the battle, Kromsky so distinguished himself in a succession of engagements as to win his spurs before he had reached the age of thirty. He was now a colonel, proud of his title, and had an ever-widening field of military ambition opening before him.

Then another romance, of which he had not yet even dreamed, entangled him in its spell. It was during one of his excursions into the mountains that he first saw the fifteen-year-old daughter of the Circassian Prince Orchidze. To the surpassing loveliness of the girl, known far and wide, was added for the dweller in cities the indefinable grace and charm of a nature not yet touched by civilization. They met by stealth, not far from her father's *aoul*, and loved each other. Their passion, steeped in the glamour of those wild times, had for its setting one of the most picturesque regions of the Caucasus. The lovers were happy in it, and when the hour came for decision,

the girl unhesitatingly forsook the home of her childhood to follow the gallant who had captured her heart. Gradually he saw the slender form unfold itself to womanhood before him, and soon his whole being was stirred to its depths by a new hope. She gave him, indeed, the supreme joy, but also the supreme anguish, of a man's heart. The son was born, but the frail mountain flower perished in giving him birth.

Prompt measures were now taken by Kromsky to secure the future of the boy. In casting about for some one to whom he could intrust the functions of guardian, he naturally allowed his mind to dwell on his intimate friend, Bogdan Ter-Simoniantz, a rich Moscow merchant, whose convoy of goods he had once saved from capture by a band of mountain robbers. From the very hour of his delivery, Ter-Simoniantz, who usually spent his summers in the Caucasus, not far from Pyatigorsk, had become the devoted friend of his rescuer; and when Kromsky, wishing to make early provision for the future, applied to him in the interest of his son, the Armenian was not only eager to fall in with the father's desires, but insisted on being allowed to bring up the lad in his own family. The officer now converted the property he had inherited into money, and handed over the proceeds to Ter-Simoniantz to be held by him in trust for the boy. It was part of Kromsky's plan

to legitimize his son by formally adopting him ; but before he could journey to St. Petersburg for the purpose, his military career was suddenly closed by the stray bullet of an insurgent mountaineer. He died with the name of the fair Circassian on his lips, and they buried him — as he had wished it to be — by her side.

Meanwhile the young Orchidze, provided with every comfort that wealth could procure, grew and thrived in the house of the man who, having no boys, but only girls of his own, fairly doted on him. From his father the lad inherited a robust constitution, a splendid physique ; his mother had dowered him with the traditional beauty of her race. In boyish sports demanding strength and speed he had few equals ; but he also showed receptivity and brilliance in intellectual achievements. In arranging for his education, Ter-Simoniantz was careful to follow the expressed wishes of his father ; for often, in those summer talks which the friends had enjoyed together near Pyatigorsk, Kromsky had clasped the lad in his arms and said emphatically, “ But whatever you do, Bogdán, don’t make a merchant of him, — he’s born to be a warrior.” So the devoted Armenian guarded him carefully against mercantile influences. The lad had private tutors, and at a comparatively early age was thoroughly grounded in natural science and modern languages. He

passed through the gymnasium with remarkable success ; and when, already a young man, he came to be entered as a student at the University, his progress there was so phenomenal as to excite general attention. There was really little need to guard Orchidze against mercantile tendencies, and as little use to destine him for the military career : his bent of mind was preëminently to intellectual pursuits. He loved books, was an omnivorous reader, and had early come under the influence of that wave of radicalism which was just then sweeping over Russia. It was scarcely, therefore, to be wondered at that in the secret club which he and a few comrades had formed for the discussion of political topics, his natural leadership should have made him a conspicuous figure ; or that in the later disputes that arose from time to time between the pupils and the University authorities, the students, tacitly or avowedly, should little by little have come to regard him as their champion.

Not many weeks after he had entered upon his twenty-third year, a painful incident decided not only the future direction of his mind, but also the whole course of his subsequent life. The University was just then engaged in the discussion of a new set of regulations which the authorities were about to impose "in the interests of discipline and good order." The students, claiming that the forthcoming rules would unjustly curtail their

rightful privileges, asked permission to discuss the whole subject in a general meeting and subsequently present resolutions to the authorities. The request was refused. The students, defying the prohibition, met in the University grounds. Then the rector, in a moment of panic, sent for the military. The Cossacks attempted to clear the grounds with their whips, but were resisted. A fierce encounter followed. In the *mêlée* a number of the soldiers were unhorsed and severely beaten; nor did many of their antagonists leave the field without bruised bodies or lacerated faces. It was now easy to reach the conclusion that the champion of the dissent had been the ringleader of the disturbance; and so, without trial, or even examination, Orchidze was exiled to Siberia for a period of four years. The rest of the implicated students were either expelled from the University or sentenced to short terms of imprisonment.

Thanks to the watchful interest of Ter-Simoniantz, Orchidze traveled to his place of banishment well supplied with money. It was perhaps due more to this circumstance than to any other that when two years of his sentence had expired, he was enabled to make his escape. Assuming the name Platónov, he spent the next three years of his life in western Europe, mostly in Switzerland. This sojourn abroad would have been sufficiently fruitful in its yield had he merely utilized it in

joining the Russian colony at Geneva, which then, as always, contained many exiles from the fatherland. He made it much more valuable by taking part in the work of the so-called "underground press," by associating himself with the leaders of the movement, and by familiarizing himself thoroughly with its methods; for all this constituted an experience that fitted him for propagandist effort at home with a completeness that could not have been attained in any other way. At the end of the three years, Platónov returned to St. Petersburg; and it was in the beginning of the seventies that he undertook the mission to the lower Volga which, as we have seen, resulted in his acquaintance with Tanya and the other personages of our story.

Platónov had taken train at Tsarítsyn, and was now, on the third day of the journey, rapidly approaching his destination. Leaving behind him the sleepy provincial life of E—— with much of the cheerful insouciance that was his habitual mood there, he had already begun to feel in advance some of the cares of his serious enterprise. He had throughout busied himself with the question of details, — had even thought out a plan for securing coöperation of the right kind, as well as of safely setting up connection with a prominent group of propagandists in St. Petersburg. It pleased him to have settled so much. Yet somehow or other he was glad to have the uplift of spirit that came

to him when he thought of Tanya: for in the chaste mystery of that early hour he seemed to see, as in a sudden vision, the graceful outlines of her from whom he had so recently parted, — the exquisitely moulded head, on whose arched neck rested shining coils; then the sweetly serious face, its large, luminous eyes bent on him with a look in which faith and love were inextricably blended. And when at last, through an opening in the landscape, he caught a distant glimpse of the snow-capped domes and towers of Moscow, their sleepy, half-Oriental summits bathed in the first light of a February sun, the sight brought a sudden fervor into his enthusiasm that made him rejoice. His doubts and forebodings were gone. The impulse to serve his country was again burning at his heart, and by some subtle alchemy that he could not explain, the two feelings that swayed him — devotion to his work and love for Tanya — were merged into one overpowering passion.

A few minutes afterwards, the train reached the Riazan Station in Moscow. There Platónov took a sleigh, and through the moving throng of vehicles that crowded the square, drove to a modest hotel near the Red Gate. Having chosen a large, well-lighted room on the second floor, he had a couple of lusty porters bring up his luggage. When the landlord came in for his passport, the propagandist promptly handed over the document

indispensable to his sojourn in Moscow. A little later, having had a bath and change of linen, he partook in his room of a light breakfast. The writing of a short letter followed; then, carefully locking his room door behind him, Platónov descended to the street, called a carriage, and drove to the University. On reaching his Alma Mater, he found the large hall on the ground floor of the building crowded with students, who were standing in little groups or pacing the pavement to and fro in animated conversation. The scene was an inspiring one, — it reminded him of his own younger years at the University, and had his journey been one of sentiment rather than business, it would have held him long a willing spectator. Quickly threading his way through the groups, he approached the box provided for the reception of students' letters, and into this dropped his note. It bore the inscription, "To the Student of the Medical Faculty, Alexéi Ivánovich Khómyakov."

That evening Platónov had just partaken of supper at his hotel, and was looking over the last issue of the "Golos," that morning's "Moskóvskiya Vyédomosti" lying still untouched on the table by his side, when a loud knock interrupted his reading. It was a characteristic knock, — delivered, to judge by the sound, with the knob of a heavy cane applied smartly to the panel of the door.

"Come in!" said Platónov heartily, dropping

his paper and rising. The door opened. Of course, it was Khómyakov, — a short, thick-set, burly looking fellow, with a broad, rather florid face, a high, pale forehead surmounted by a luxuriant crop of dark red hair, grown everywhere into short matted curls, and small eyes half concealed by grayish brown lashes, that moved quickly to and fro. The visitor came forward a pace or two, stopped suddenly, dropped his stick, and held out both hands to Platónov. They were promptly grasped as the men came together.

“Well,” began Khómyakov, when they had taken seats and each had a lighted cigarette in his mouth, “so you are back again in Moscow, Vádím Alexándrovich. I did n’t expect you quite so soon ; but the sooner the better for an affair like ours. How is business down the Volga ?”

“Fairly brisk, Alexéi Ivánovich,” replied the propagandist. “A good demand, I should say, for wares like ours all along the river.”

“Why should n’t there be ?” asked the other dryly. “People down there are n’t over-satisfied with the goods they ’ve been getting.”

“True ; and the dissatisfaction is growing.”

“How about competition ?”

“So far, competition has been light in that quarter ; but it is starting up again, and may be severe this spring.”

While Platónov talked, his Moscow friend, hav-

ing taken the cigarette from his mouth, hummed a few bars of a popular song. Suddenly he asked, "How about E——?"

"No interference whatever."

"Then you had no anxiety there?"

"Not the slightest. I had an exceptionally quiet time."

"But you say there will be competition later?"

"There will."

"That is a good thing to know. The people at 'Piter' will want to hear of it. The business is to be concentrated this spring in as many towns and villages as possible; besides, they are sending out travelers, most of whom will pass through Moscow."

The men lighted fresh cigarettes.

"How is it, then, in Moscow?"

"Ugh! — bad! Wretchedly bad!" Khómyakov's broad face contracted in a grimace as the men rose and began to pace the room. "We have something like fifty waiting.¹ Still, with prudence and caution, something might be done even here."

"You know my plan?" queried Platónov.

"I do, — and think it excellent."

"Could n't you get me a reliable associate or two?"

"I was thinking it over on my way hither. I have two excellent fellows in mind, who know how to print." The speaker italicized the latter

¹ Awaiting trial.

part of the sentence by dropping his voice almost to a whisper, and added in the same tone, "By the way, Vádím Alexándrovich, here's an envelope for you which the writers could n't afford to drop into a letter-box."

Platónov opened the envelope, removed from it a sheet of paper, and having taken a seat at the table, began a scrutinizing study of the missive. The writing was in cipher. It consisted of four long rows of figures, massed in groups of one, two, and three, the groups separated from each other by dots. Taking a blank sheet of paper, Platónov copied out each row of figures, and wrote under them his key cipher, repeating it until the last figure of the message was reached. Then by subtracting the numbers of the key cipher from the numbers of the message cipher, he obtained the numbers of the true message. His key was, "*Volga mátushka shirókaya ryeká*" (Mother Volga is a broad river), one of the lines of a well-known popular song. The communication from his friends in St. Petersburg ran: "We want funds to carry on our work. Urgently need an organ here. Better come to 'Piter' and help us, if you can."

Platónov read off the result to his friend. Khómyakov gave a surprised whistle, shrugged his shoulders, and with his eyebrows raised, looked for a moment or two like a man greatly astonished.

“Well,” said he, “and what do you propose to do, Vádim Alexándrovich?”

“What is your advice?”

“Why,” replied the Moscow man musingly, “I don’t care to advise you. If there is anything to be done, you know best what to do.”

Platónov buried his head in his hands. After some minutes spent in reflection, the other not saying a word, the propagandist rose. “I shall go,” he began. “At first I thought I might do better here, but if ‘Piter’ wants me, I am ready. Besides, after thinking the matter over, it seems that work there might be worth ten times as much as anything that could be done in Moscow, especially at the present time. I had a personal predilection for Moscow, you know, but” — A puff from the speaker’s cigarette, and a hasty wave of his hand, completed the sentence.

“How much money have they?” suddenly asked the propagandist.

“A few thousand roubles.”

“No more? Then I shall have to take some with me.”

Khómyakov now resumed his seat near the table: Platónov took a place by his side; and the two men sat talking together in a low voice until late in the night.

The next morning a sleigh might have been

seen leaving the hotel near the Red Gate. It passed through the Sadóvaya, and having turned into Tvérskaya Street, followed the line of that handsome thoroughfare up to within a hundred yards or more of the Arch of Triumph, finally coming to a standstill in front of the richly furnished store of Ter-Simoniantz. Here Platónov, for he was the occupant, dismounted, gave an instruction to the driver, then loitered up to the great windows of the establishment, in which there was a fine display of Oriental goods. The propagandist had often discovered an eastern strain in his imagination, and now the thought of it recurred as his eye fell on gayly colored silks, curiously chased silverware, fantastically decorated saddles, picturesque uniforms, richly embroidered robes and head-dresses, pistols mounted in the precious metals, quaint matchlocks inlaid with mother-of-pearl, and steel-bladed daggers with jeweled handles. This gorgeous *pêle-mêle* — to produce which workmen from Persia and the Ind, from Circassia, Daghestan, Bokhara, and every part of Central Asia, had vied with each other — led the gazer's fancy captive, and set him thinking of that life among the mountains which he knew as yet only as a family tradition. His reverie could not be long. As he entered the store, Ter-Simoniantz caught sight of the visitor, and at once came forward to meet him. The proprietor

was a man of commanding presence, and stood erect, although a sexagenarian. The face was unquestionably handsome. The high forehead and aquiline nose gave it character; the jet-black eyebrows, arched over piercing eyes, contributed to its strong outlines; but it was made yet more striking by the snowy white locks that framed it, flowing down on both sides as far as the shoulders.

Ter-Simoniantz greeted his caller with a quick glance of intelligence, yet there was nothing in his words to show that he was addressing any other than an ordinary customer. "What may I show you?" he asked, with a deferential gesture.

"Oh, you might let me see some rugs," answered Platónov.

"Will you please follow me?"

Having led his visitor to a remote corner of the store, Ter-Simoniantz lifted from the shelves some Daghestan rugs and unrolled them on the waxed floor. His hands trembled slightly.

"This is quite unexpected, my dear boy," observed the old man, as he pointed to the carpets.

"Yes; and I am here on business. In fact, I want to draw on you, my good Bogdán."

"Well, well," rejoined the merchant, shaking his head. "I'm afraid you'll never get rich, Vádim."

"No," replied the other, with a smile. "I never had much ambition in that direction. Jok-

ing aside, I'm going to ask you for quite a large sum this time, — 10,000 roubles at least."

"You shall have it, my dear. When am I to pay it over?"

"Oh, the sooner the better. The truth is, I need it at once."

Ter-Simohiantz seemed to be pondering the matter over in his mind. For a moment or two he was silent. Then, looking up, he said, "Very well. I shall have it ready for you to-morrow night. But you must come and see me, — I mean at my country house. Do come, for the sake of our old Caucasus. Come and taste the native dishes. You know them, Vádím, — the *pilavs*, the *kababs*, and all that; and we'll drink the sparkling wine of Kaheta, — the genuine article, mind you, — just as we used to eat and drink together in the old times." There was an appealing look in the old man's eyes as he held out his hand to give added emphasis to the invitation.

Seeing Platónov hesitate, and rightly divining that he was weighing the risk that would be run in entertaining him, the merchant went on: "Vádím, my boy, I live quite alone outside the city. There's nobody at home but an old Malanya housekeeper: my daughters, you know, are all married and live in the Caucasus. So we shall be all to ourselves. Do come, my dear Orchidze, for old time's sake."

Platónov, on hearing himself thus addressed, started slightly and turned a trifle pale. No word of caution from the visitor was needed to show Ter-Simoniantz that he had committed an indiscretion, but a glance around the store convinced the old man that he had not been overheard. So, after a little further hesitation, the propagandist yielded, and having taken a note of the merchant's country address, hastily quitted the magazine.

Ter-Simoniantz did not immediately go back to his business. The sudden appearance of so unexpected a visitor had called up a train of recollections that could not be quickly disposed of. And now the old man — his face thoughtful and serious beyond its wont — gravely paced the polished floor, thinking no more of customers, but of a bright epoch in his life with which his handsome caller had become inseparably associated.

“Years,” he mused, “since he and I came together, yet I knew him at a glance. Handsome as ever, — ay, bewitchingly handsome! No wonder that the men always envied, and the women went crazy over him! His father, too, was a fine fellow; but the lad's beauty must have come to him through his mother. Then the princely blood in his veins: how it comes out in his features, his bearing, his aristocratic manners, — in everything he says and does! The old Prince Orchidze himself might have been proud of such a grandson!”

Heaving a deep sigh, Ter-Simoniantz walked to his desk, and taking from it a chromo-lithograph on which were printed the pictures of the ancient kings of Armenia, he gazed at it long and intently. Yet there was nothing in the old man's face to reveal what was passing through his mind. Perhaps he was recalling a boyhood spent among his own people; perhaps he was thinking of the far-away time when Armenia was an independent kingdom. The clock struck twelve, but he did not hear it. It was not all business that day with Bogdán Nazárich Ter-Simoniantz.

The temper of reminiscence was also in the mind of Platónov as, after completing his preparations, he retired to his room in the hotel. Indeed, the preoccupations of the past few days, — the succession of new environments yielded by the journey itself; above all, the circumstances of his interview with the Armenian, — these had exercised his imagination to an unwonted degree; and now, in the half hour between wakefulness and sleep, he found himself recalling the faces, the personages, even the incidents which bound him so closely to the fortunes of his propagandist friends in St. Petersburg. One of them in particular had been his fellow exile in Siberia, and as his mind dwelt on the circumstances of their life together, he felt it carried with irresistible force to an

episode which, at the time of its occurrence, had left an indelible impression. Before him, as he lay, in his half vision, half dream, the features of a familiar landscape seemed to stretch themselves; and in it he could not fail to recall the dreaded outlines of the mines of N——. Again he seemed to be gazing upon its sullen gorges and ravines, — here its log prison, there its straggling huts perched on the heights or well-nigh buried in the snow-drifts; again he was aware of the gloomy entrance to the mine, and in the light of its beacon fire seemed to see the figures of the convict workers, — almost to hear the clink of the pickaxe, the clang of the chain bucket, the jolt of the wheelbarrow. Amid such surroundings as these it was that his mind proceeded to reconstruct one winter scene which he felt could never be effaced from his memory while he remained alive. It was the occasion on which, as the convict party were returning from the mine, a message reached them to the effect that the exile Ilyin lay in his hut at the point of death and wished to see all his old friends. How vividly Platónov remembered the details of that night visit! Not long did it take them to reach the cabin of Ilyin, and then, as the door opened to receive the party, there was not one among them who did not recognize at a glance that their stay could not be other than brief. On the red brick stove before them lay at length the fig-

ure of their comrade, visibly in the last stages of disease. The face was wan and wasted to an extreme, but the beauty of manhood still lingered in the profile, the strong lines of which were silhouetted in black shadow upon the adjacent wall. As his comrades entered, the dying man turned to them with a quick glance of recognition. He even raised his head slightly, as if about to sit up; but the effort proved too much for his strength, and the patient sank back exhausted. A long pause followed. Finally the eyes opened, and this time they encountered the youthful face of the friend from whom he was so soon to be separated. The wasted arm now moved convulsively; it drew something from beneath the bed cover and placed it in the hand of the exile. At this moment the candle fell from its rude support, plunging the party in darkness. When, with difficulty relit, the flame again cast its sickly rays upon the stove, the consumptive's face was rigid in death. The doctor, after a brief examination, announced the decease to the onlookers. The convicts piously made the sign of the cross, and stood a moment or two in silence. Then, with a last look at the corpse, they crossed themselves anew and turned to the door. The bitterest experience of all was the scene at the grave; for in his vision Platónov was again among the exiles who, gathered on the cliff side, lowered a rude coffin into the frozen

ground and raised over the place of its sepulture a simple wooden cross bearing the name "Ilyin."

Such were the scenes which flitted before the excited mind of Platónov as he lay in the Moscow hotel between sleeping and waking, — scenes in which the memory as well, perhaps, as the imagination had been at work. Possessing all the verisimilitude of objects actually present to the senses, they yet had a circumstantiality of place and time such as distinguishes the recollection, with its power to realize the succession of events, from the mere vision, in which objects and occurrences are grouped as in a mass. It was only when the last lines of the illusion had vanished that the propagandist left his couch and began pacing the room. The vision had made a deep impression; and with the whole strength of the Oriental nature in him recrudescant, he found himself wondering what the strange experience might portend. Perhaps a warning of his own impending fate, — perhaps a message from his dead friend, conveyed to him in some mysterious way through the only object which now connected them. He had heard before of things material exerting the power of suggestion over minds deeply fraught; why might it not happen in his case? As the thought flashed upon him, his hand wandered involuntarily to the talisman trinket, with its picture of an unknown

face, which he still wore around his neck, — held there now, as always, by the vow which he had taken that it should never leave him while he lived. For a while longer the disturbing apprehensions lingered ; then, as the propagandist's mind cleared itself of the vision, his wonted composure returned. Throwing himself again upon his couch, he soon yielded to fatigue, and his last thought, as he fell asleep, was one of regret that he had no portrait of Tanya.

CHAPTER XV

THE PROPAGANDIST DISAPPEARS

THE news from St. Petersburg had disappointed Platónov, but it had not taken him by surprise. He had chosen Moscow as the scene of his effort, first because he knew it better than the new capital, then because it had seemed to him desirable to found, at long remove from northern influences, an independent centre of propaganda in the very heart of the country. He leaned to Moscow because he had always felt it to be the true hearth of the national life; because he recognized that here, if anywhere, there was at once the need and the opportunity of bringing the new ideas to bear upon the hard, crystallized mental structure of the older Russia. It was in the ancient capital where the narrowest of the modern theologies had its home, and where the idea of aristocratic privileges and of the natural subjection of the common people to the civil and ecclesiastical hierarchy had deeply implanted itself in the national mind. It was therefore here, he had thought, that a powerful blow for popular enlightenment might be struck; in which thought the very inertia of the old order,

instead of being a disadvantage, seemed to him to supply a resistance against which the forces of progress might assert themselves.

Yet the propagandist had never felt himself pledged to Moscow with an absoluteness that admitted of no change in this part of his plan. Arguments just as weighty might be urged in favor of St. Petersburg. There was first of all a marked personal predilection. The cosmopolitan life of the northern city had a fascination for him not unlike that which western Europe itself had wielded over his imagination. Platónov cherished no reverence for the Middle Ages as such ; nor did he believe his people were to be helped by trying to retain them in garments which they had already outgrown. Like her who had stimulated his enthusiasm anew, he felt that help was to come, not from the retirement of Russia into herself as the Slavophiles were teaching, but in her more and more complete Europeanization. The natural barrier of language, the artificial barriers to travel and to exchange of ideas imposed in the interest of a privileged class, had long retarded the unification of Russia with the western nations ; but the most superficial observer could not fail to see that the final consummation of this process, despite the thousand obstacles thrown in its way, was inevitable.

St. Petersburg was the gate through which the

new influences were streaming, — unhindered, because unhinderable ; influences of thoughts which all the power of the censor and the custom-house officer could not keep out ; influences that came in with travelers as well as with books ; influences that were surely, if slowly, bringing on those assimilations that spring from the contact of nations with one another. In such a conflict — the conflict of the new ideas with the old order — “ Piter ” had a prestige to which Moscow, the champion of order, could never pretend ; while in “ Piter,” where the strongest minds of Russia had thought and toiled, there was perhaps the inspiration of a larger movement than could ever be set on foot in so conservative a centre of the national life as the old capital.

It was all the more natural that thoughts like these should occupy the mind of Platónov on the day following his visit to Ter-Simoniantz, for he had been reminded by that visit in subtle ways of what his long absence from the city had caused him to forget, — that Moscow, so long dominated by the commercial spirit, was little suited to a propaganda of ideas that assailed it at its very foundations. All this, as he reflected upon it, grew clearer to him. He even reached the conclusion that the wisest step he could take might after all be to carry his plan and his enthusiasm to St. Petersburg. Yet he could not leave Moscow with-

out regret. Years were certain to elapse before fate would direct his steps that way again: he might never again stand so near the white walls of the mother city, or have it so easily within his power to visit the picturesque environments of his boyhood.

Thus it was that a great longing came over him to see once more the great heart of Moscow. So, having perfected his arrangements for departure, he dispatched his trunks to the Nicholas Station, to be in readiness there for the night train to the north. Then he strolled down the Myasnítskaya, paused a moment to deposit several letters at the general post-office, and finally entered the Kreml by the Saviour Gate. A flood of recollections awoke within him as he paced the classic ground of his early life as a student. True, the white walls had lost even in his eyes some of their ancient grandeur; the triangular space which they inclosed had perceptibly dwindled from its whilom vastness. But the great squares, the gorgeously decorated palaces, the imposing monuments, the rich cathedrals; the hurrying to and fro of visitors; the church processions; the gathering of the orthodox to service; the pacing to and fro of the sentries in front of public buildings; the shouts of the vendors in the *Ryadi*; ¹ then, over all, the hubbub

¹ "Lines," or "Rows," the name given to a famous open market in Moscow.

of the bells, — a canopy of sound through whose deep clangings of bronze there ran, delicately traced on the sombre background, innumerable luminous tinklings of silver; — all this awoke for him the old life, and around it gathered again the ancient glamour that had made the place sacred for him in his boyhood.

Yet even in Moscow, amid the scenes that most attached him to it, he found the want, the wretchedness, the ignorance, the superstition that stood in the way of better things for Russia; and as he looked to the northeast from a terrace that gave a view in that direction, he saw something which moved him deeply. It was the smoke from the factories, mills, and forges that were springing up on the outskirts of the city, — the sign already in the sky of a new serfdom, — the slavery of the laborer, the factory operative, the artisan. For Platónov was not merely the champion of individual rights in a society which seemed to have lost the very idea of them: he was a socialist, strong in his opposition to the exploitation of men, women, and children by the state-aided forces of capital, and more than ever eager, since his visit to Europe, to demand for the worker an equitable share of the products of his industry. The thought of the long, unremitting toil, the wretched fare, the still more wretched home life of Russia's new army of proletariats, filled him with sadness.

As Platónov turned away from those smoke clouds full of meaning, he became aware of the fixed gaze of a man whom he had seen when entering the Kreml. It was an officer of police in uniform, — a tall, well-built fellow, with a penetrating look, and a face whose strong outlines were rendered still more striking by a long, flowing beard. The propagandist's eyes, meeting those of the official, noticed that they were turned upon him not with the careless gaze of a chance *rencontre*, but with a scrutinizing glance that indicated at once suspicion and hostility. At first it seemed as if the man was about to address him, yet he allowed Platónov to pass on, simply watching his figure until it was out of sight. An hour later, feeling some anxiety regarding his luggage, the propagandist thought it might be well to ascertain whether it had safely arrived at the Nicholas Station. With this purpose in view, he took a sleigh in the Red Square, and was soon moving at a brisk pace through the Marosséika in the direction of Garden Street. For a while nothing occurred to divert his mind very seriously from the thoughts suggested by his visit to the Kreml. The cloudy morning finally broke; the sun came out; the streets, filling up with vehicles, assumed a livelier aspect. It was only when Platónov had covered about half the distance to his destination that an unexpected source of uneasiness presented itself.

The propagandist began to notice the strange movements of a sleigh which, somehow or other, he had never quite lost sight of since his departure from the Red Gate. At times it had been driven on a little in advance; now and then it had lingered behind; occasionally it would stop at some corner until Platónov's vehicle had gone on; then it would again follow, to repeat over and over again the same manœuvres. The vehicle was an open one drawn by two horses; it had, in addition to the driver, who sat in front, two occupants. Both wore military caps; but the collars of their overcoats, being closely drawn around the men's heads, made it impossible to see the face of either. Yet once it happened, when the strange vehicle was passing the carriage in which the propagandist sat, that a sudden gust of wind blew back the heavy collar of the man nearest to him and disclosed the characteristic features and heavy beard of the officer who had scrutinized him near the Kreml.

Nothing more was needed to show Platónov that he was being watched, and that, for the present, at any rate, it would not be safe for him to make any inquiries regarding his luggage. A call at the station might easily lead to the examination of his property, and then inevitably to his arrest. It was too late to avoid any suspicion which proximity to his destination might excite: he was now in the

Kalanchévskaya, — could, in fact, already see in front the dark outlines of the railway buildings. To turn back would only confirm the suspicions of his watchers, — might even give them a pretext for action. He therefore resolved to drive boldly on past the Nicholas Station, dismiss his driver on the other side of the Red Pond, and then stroll up Sokólnichye Street in the direction of the famous park of that name. This being the only chance of diverting suspicion left to him, he at once embraced the opportunity it seemed to present.

The thoroughfare at this point contained but few vehicles; in dismounting, he noticed with a feeling of relief that the troublesome sleigh had fallen greatly to the rear. With six hours to spare before the departure of his train, he had ample time in which to outwit his pursuers and rejoin his luggage by a circuitous route. So thinking and planning, Platónov began his stroll up the Sokólnichye. He had been walking perhaps five minutes when the sound of sleigh-irons fell on his ear. Moving his head slightly, he saw the carriage which had excited his apprehensions. The driver urged it forward some twenty yards or more, then dexterously turning his vehicle in a semicircle, brought it to a standstill close to the curbstone, some three or four yards in front of the propagandist. In an instant the tall officer had sprung from the sleigh and had his hand on the pedestrian's shoulder.

"We want you to come with' us," said he, with a smile on his rather handsome features.

"You do?" rejoined Platónov, with flashing eyes; "and on what charge?"

"On what charge? Oh, you want to know on what charge, do you? You must have been in western Europe, eh? Well, we'll tell you the charge when we get you to the station." Both men laughed.

"I insist on knowing why I am arrested," continued Platónov.

"Oh, you do, do you? Well, we're not obliged to tell you anything. We have n't told you yet that there is any charge. It's enough for you to know that you are a suspicious person, and that we want you. Now, get inside the carriage quick, and don't keep us waiting. It may cause you trouble."

Platónov had talked only to gain time. While engaging the officer in conversation, he had contrived to take a swift survey of his surroundings. A few pedestrians were passing up and down the sidewalk; the street itself was clear of obstacles. Yet fifty yards distant, in the direction from which he had come, an unoccupied sleigh was standing near the sidewalk, where it had been temporarily left by its driver.

In a flash Platónov's plan of action was formed. "Well," said he, "if I must go, I must. But you shall tell me afterwards why I am arrested." Say-

ing this, the propagandist made a zealous movement towards the carriage. It was only a feint. No sooner did he feel the hand on his shoulder relax than he deftly planted his right foot against the heels of his captor, and with a quick thrust of both arms against the burly body, sent the man staggering along the pavement, to fall heavily upon it several yards away.

Before the official in the carriage could recover from his astonishment, the propagandist, in a few panther-like leaps, had covered half the distance that first separated him from the waiting sleigh; a second or two later, he had reached the coveted vehicle. It was the work of a moment to lash the horse into a gallop. He was not an instant too soon. The officers, recovering from their surprise, had already begun the pursuit. With whip and voice the driver was urging the animals to the top of their speed, while the occupants were calling on the fugitive to stop. Suddenly, as Platónov fled, he heard the crack of a revolver; a moment later there was a second report. They were firing at him. The pursuing shouts seemed to grow louder. His ear already caught the sound made by the hoofs of the horses in his rear. Presently there was another shot, and simultaneously with it the fugitive felt a sharp twinge of pain in his left arm.

Platónov now plucked a revolver from the breast

pocket of his coat, and turned half round on his seat. Taking deliberate aim at the horse nearest him, he fired. The animal, a fine, high-stepping bay, fell with a cry of pain. Meeting with a sudden resistance, the sleigh swerved sharply, breaking its shafts, but the harness held firm, and the brake applied by the dead weight of the wounded animal quickly brought the carriage to a standstill.

The officers sprang from the wreck of their vehicle, and, revolver in hand, continued the pursuit on foot. It seemed now a hopeless chase. The shots they fired flew wide of the mark; there was no other carriage of any kind in sight; the fugitive was rapidly drawing away. A few stolid pedestrians had paused lazily as the flying sleighs swept past, but none of them had shown presence of mind enough to realize the situation. Still others, attracted by the cries of the pursuers, would stare with a gaze of blank astonishment from the sidewalks, or look helplessly up and down the thoroughfare. Thus far, not one had lifted a hand to stop the fugitive.

Platónov felt that if he could once again get into the thick of the city, his escape was assured. But now something unforeseen happened. From out a side street which he was approaching, a cart laden with timber drove into the main thoroughfare. The spectacle of the fugitive's mad race toward

him confused the driver; his leading horse shied from the approaching vehicle, with the result that the team was thrown athwart the street in such a way that its long timbers blocked all passage. The propagandist saw the danger, but could not stop his sleigh in time to avoid a collision. All he could do was to rein in the horse, directing it as near to the curbstone as possible. The shock then came. The projecting timbers, catching one of the sledge-irons, tore it completely away from the frame of the carriage. As the horse leaped upon the sidewalk, dragging the broken vehicle after it, Platónov sprang upon one of the beams, and from that descended lightly into the street.

The situation was now critical. Encouraged by the accident, the officers were approaching with loud cries; a number of pedestrians had joined in the pursuit; already a hue and cry had begun; the fugitive saw that the rabble of the old Moscow was at his heels. But he was still free. Being, moreover, an expert runner, he knew well that in a contest of swiftness he could easily outdistance his pursuers. His only apprehension came from the thought that they might yet procure the help of some passing vehicle, and thus come again within pistol shot of him. Suddenly, as he ran, a sight met his eyes that gladdened him. It was the cluster of sleighs opposite the Nicholas Station, which he was now rapidly nearing. If he could reach

them before his pursuers, he was safe. Glancing back over his shoulder, he noticed with astonishment that while the officers were still following at safe distance, a single runner, far ahead of the rest, was slowly bearing down upon him. Platónov shot forward with well-nigh redoubled speed. Before he could reach the sledges, the cry of "Stop him!" "Stop him!" sounded ominously behind, and was repeated in the more distant clamor of many voices. Sounding in the ears of the twenty or more drivers who all the morning had been lazily sitting on their boxes in front of the station, it awoke them to activity. The sight of a well-dressed man hotly pursued by a mob was a novelty to the Jehus; and with the same instinct that urges a pack of dogs to tear a wild animal, they, too, wanted to be in at the death. Quickly descending from their vehicles, and forming a loose chain, the men prepared to stop the fugitive as soon as he should reach their line. All were big, robust fellows, any one of whom, in a struggle of brute force, could have overborne a stronger antagonist than Platónov. But the persuasive power of a revolver, when the finger of a desperate man is on its trigger, loses nothing by distribution among numbers.

The propagandist drew his weapon as he came on, and the sight of the glistening tube cooled the zeal of their preparations. "Make way!" shouted

Platónov, as he passed through the parted line and ran straight to the sleigh on the outer rim of the group.

“Stop him!” “Stop him!” again rose the cry, and the exclamation was repeated in twenty different voices.

The pursuing mob was now almost at hand. It seemed that in a moment or two the audacious fugitive must be captured. Even the drivers felt their courage revive. Uttering threats and imprecations, they closed up around the propagandist before he could get the vehicle into motion. One of them seized the bridle, while the others prepared to mount the carriage.

In the dangerous situations of life the dynamic of an imperious will is half the battle. On Platónov's face the light of a sublime courage now flashed forth: it was the fearlessness of high ideals, — such a resolve, in moments of peril, as comes to him who, however unavailingly, believes that he champions the cause of the oppressed against the oppressors.

“Back!” he cried; “the first who lays hands on this sleigh dies!” The circling menace of his revolver gave emphasis to the warning, and the assailants fell back a space. Then, with a quick blow of the reins, Platónov started the horse. Tearing himself from the grasp of the man who held it, the animal galloped forward.

Followed by the yells of his pursuers, who had just entered the square, as well as by the last shots of the now empty official revolvers, the propagandist drove for a while with almost break-neck speed. Then, slackening his pace somewhat, he passed through Dómnikova Street, turned to the left into the Sadóvaya, ran some distance down the Myasnítskaya, entered one of the small streets leaving it at right angles, and by a circuitous route, along little frequented thoroughfares, reached a point where Varvárskaya Street turns into the Krivóy Pereúlok. There he left his vehicle and proceeded on foot.

The pursuit was now to all appearances dead. Platónov had been careful to pick out the finest animal on the square, — a task not difficult, since the rest were small horses, wiry enough for ordinary work, but visibly incapable of sustained speed. Moreover, the officers were by this time out of breath, discouraged as well as fatigued; being now practically unarmed, they were not in a condition to follow the flying suspect for any great distance. At first, it was true, there had been some signs of pursuit over the zigzag route the propagandist had taken, but the suspicious carriage seemed to have fallen back and finally disappeared. So that, at the end of his hurried ride, Platónov felt himself to be reasonably safe. Yet even here, in the heart of the city, his objective point, a new

apprehension disturbed him. That the police knew anything concerning his luggage, he did not believe. His sojourn at the hotel had been throughout unmolested. It must have been something in his appearance and movements that had aroused the suspicions of the officer. He felt, all the same, that a journey to the Nicholas Station in his present attire would be perilous, perhaps fatal. Fifty people would recognize him there. Some change in his dress was imperative. Suddenly he remembered the *Ryadi*, or "Rows," with their long, narrow lanes, crowded year in and year out with buyers and sellers, all day resonant with the babble and hubbub of traffic, — the wondrous shops of his boyhood, where everything could be purchased, from a pie to a door-lock, from a pin to a suit of clothes. The secrecy of such a place was well suited to his purpose. Thither he now directed his course; yet he had not gone more than thirty paces before the sound of stealthy footsteps caused him to turn his head. To his amazement, he saw the two officers whom he thought he had outwitted hastily approaching him.

To enter the *Ryadi* now would have meant certain capture. He ran swiftly to the end of the Varvárskaya, then turned sharply to the right into the Red Square. When his pursuers reached the corner a second or two later, Platónov had disappeared.

What had become of him? At the point where the earth seemed to have swallowed up the fugitive stands an architectural wonder, one of Moscow's famous cathedrals, centuries old. As the propagandist came in sight of the edifice, the summons of its bells, calling the faithful to a special service, had just ceased; and over the pavement, towards one of its many doors, the last group of late worshipers was making its way. Slackening his pace, Platónov brushed past the laggards into the interior.

On the vast congregation gathered within a hush was settling down, — it was the pause before the beginning of service. And as the silence fell from the gloom-filled spaces overhead, a little lower the day streamed in with a troubled splendor through painted windows, to be reinforced as it entered by the artificial light of innumerable lamps and tapers. In this double illumination the holy pictures of saints and the jeweled shrines of apostles and martyrs shone from all the walls; while just above the upturned faces could be seen the mild, benignant countenance of ecclesiastical power, surmounted by the gleaming tiara of the Metropolitan.

Into the standing throng the fugitive thrust himself; like one seeking some coveted point of vantage, he clove the compact masses with his

supple, vigorous body ; insistent, yet speechless, he passed through the incense, the whispers, and the prayers into the heart of the unsuspecting multitude, and so lost himself in it, as in the tremulous waters of a subsiding sea.

CHAPTER XVI

AGAIN THE FATAL ASTRAKHÁNSKAYA

IF Platónov exulted as the night train from Moscow bore him northward, it was not for himself, but for the work to which he had devoted his life, and for her whose image was now indelibly imprinted upon his heart. His, moreover, was no ordinary rejoicing: it was rather the quiet satisfaction of a cautious fatalism that guards against over-exultation as against a pestilence. Life had taught the propagandist not to place too exaggerated a dependence upon its possibilities. It was his habit to acquiesce in good with a resignation not unlike the attitude moralists enjoin towards the misfortunes of existence. His theory of the universe was complicated by no search after final causes. He regarded the world around him as a mighty complex of forces that, whatever their origin or destiny, were to be utilized as far as possible to the great end of human progress. He recognized a realm within which these forces could be grasped and mastered; but beyond the comparatively small area of them accessible to the intelligent will, he saw stretching away to infinity the



invisible workings of that vast cosmos of Power to which the ancients in their ignorance were accustomed to give the name of Fate. Out of the great ocean of events that impended, anything might come, — the unforeseen as well as the foreseen: all that a man could do was to plan as well as he knew how, and then patiently leave the rest to the unknowable and unpredicable future.

When Platónov reached the great railway station which forms the terminus of the Nicholas line in St. Petersburg, he called a coachman and drove with his luggage to some furnished apartments near the Anichkin Bridge. Having there established himself for a lengthy sojourn, he took a sleigh to one of the last "Lines," known as *Roty*, of the Izmaïlovsky Polk. On the corner of the line stood an immense, dingy-looking building, painted yellow, of the lodging-house type peculiar to St. Petersburg. This structure, in flats and single apartments, gave accommodation to many thousands of human beings, and had at this time a sort of reputation in the capital as the house that needed a police station all to itself. Passing into the courtyard, he made his way up a stairway to a lodging on the third floor, and was there, on ringing, promptly admitted to what became a long conference with the friends who were to be his coadjutors.

It was late in the afternoon when, with a lighted

cigarette in his mouth, he sallied forth to walk down the Nevsky Prospékt. The weather was that of a rather mild day in March; a light coating of snow rested on the ground; the thoroughfares were thronged with pedestrians and vehicles. In the famous boulevard lingering winter still displayed its extremes of hunger and satiety, of poverty and riches; it gave to the eye its many-hued phantasmagoria, to provide which the sombrely attired priest jostled with the gayly uniformed military officer, and the unpicturesque beggar strode cheek by jowl with the merchant millionaire. From all of which Platónov drew the sense of pleasure yielded by familiar things re-seen, as with an easy, nonchalant, swinging step he passed down the Nevsky towards the Liténia. Having recovered from the slight flesh wound in his left arm, he looked the picture of health. His course was now definitely settled. The conference with his friends had resulted satisfactorily. The funds he had brought with him, already deposited in responsible hands, were to be applied to a propaganda identical with that on which he had so long set his heart. It was to be a scheme of popular enlightenment that should minister on the one hand to the common people, on the other to the educated classes. A newspaper was to be the chief feature of the plan; the new propagandist press would also issue brochures and "flying sheets" for general distri-

bution all over Russia. While, therefore, the details had been left for future discussion, the general features of the plan, which gave Platónov, in consultation with his comrades, the chief control, were already as good as consummated. No wonder that the propagandist felt gratified. He saw himself already within measurable distance of his ambition ; already golden visions of what might be accomplished in even a few years of devoted effort were beginning to flit through his mind. Yet he did not feel altogether at his ease. It seemed to him that his good fortune was to be purchased, in some way or other, at the cost of mental unrest. Every now and then the recollection of his narrow escape at Moscow would recur with disturbing effect ; from moment to moment he became aware of something which broke in upon his thoughts, — a dark background of anxiety that chilled his enthusiasm while it sobered his fancy. And as he walked, this vague, nameless apprehension — was it not, even, fear ? — seemed to deepen.

It was while Platónov took his way over the Litéinia Bridge that Anícia Ivánovna was beginning to prepare supper in the little room on the Astrakhánskaya. Since the death of the baby, the two children, Zakhár and Natásha, had constituted her sole family, and they now played around her as she bustled about. The old woman was the

same genial body whom the reader knew when he first made her acquaintance. Of course time had wrought changes in her, as it does in all of us. There were undoubtedly a few more wrinkles in her face, and a sadder look in her eyes, than on that occasion. She now wore her arm in a sling; the limp in her walk was unmistakable. Yet she had not grown any the less active, so her preparations for the evening meal were swiftly made. Soon the samovar was bubbling in its accustomed place, and the little family were partaking of a modest repast which included milk, some bread, and pickled mushrooms, the last delicacy being a dish regarded as *de rigueur* during the great fast.

Now, as Anícia Ivánovna sat sipping her glass of tea, exchanging a word or two with the prattling children, watching their black shadows dancing on the wall, or glancing for an instant at the empty cradle, — a shade of deeper thoughtfulness than usual on her face, — there came a sudden knock at the door. It was a modest kind of a knock, — one of those gentle, appealing requests for admission that seem to indicate the character of the person who makes it too clearly to be misunderstood. The old woman arose without hesitation, limped to the door, and opened it promptly, as if she expected a friend, though who that friend might be she had not the slightest idea. In a moment she was aware of a tall, well-dressed,

handsome man who was asking her name. She answered him in her homely way, then heard him saying, "My name is Platónov. I come from Tatiána Vladímírovna Lobanóva."

Anícia Ivánovna's face beamed with delight. "From Tanya?" she ejaculated. "Oh, how glad I am! You are indeed welcome. Do come in!" She hastened, as she spoke, to offer him a chair, and would have prepared tea for him had he not gently restrained her.

"I have just had tea," he explained, motioning her to a seat by his side; "and I have come to talk with you about yourself, about the little ones, and about Tanya."

"Oh, do tell me about Tanya. And how is the good, dear soul?"

Platónov satisfied the old woman's affectionate curiosity to the full, then asked after her own health. "You are hurt?" he inquired.

"Yes," she replied, "and I shall tell you how it came about. You know that my daughter, Anna Petróvna, was arrested along with Tanya. Well, Serguéi — that's my son — could not get any news of his wife. She is in the fortress over there." The old woman pointed with her right hand in the direction of the prison. "His grief at the death of the baby, and the thought of the mother's poor health, — all that preyed on his mind, and nearly broke his heart. So at last the

lad tried something desperate, — tried to smuggle himself into the fortress to see her, and got caught. Of course, when I missed him and knew that he had been arrested, I nearly went wild. Well, I ran in my trouble to General Peterson. You may have heard of him. He is in the Third Section. I used to be a nurse in his family. Yes, I brought up all his daughters, and the sweet things still call me Nyanya. They are very fond of me. Well, he promised, the general did, — mostly for the sake of his children, who pleaded for me, — to take me to the House of Preliminary Detention, where Serguéi was to be examined, and secure me an interview with him. I went there at the time appointed. While going up a broad staircase, all at once I saw my son walking below between gendarmes. I turned and ran to him, but missed my footing, — more on account of my age, you know, than anything else, and then I was so worried and troubled.” Here the old woman paused, wiped her eyes with a corner of her apron, and went on: “Yes, I missed my footing, and rolled all the length of that staircase to the bottom. That’s how I sprained my ankle and broke my arm. General Peterson saw it all, — he was standing on the landing above, — and when they picked me up, he just shook his head and said, ‘Oh, young men, young men, that’s what you bring your parents to!’ ”

"And where is your son now?" asked the visitor.

"Still in the House of Preliminary Detention. He has to stay there for two years. General Peterson, he says to me, 'Now, you must thank the Lord and the blessed saints, Nyanya, for the lenience shown to him. It was a very serious offense,' said he, 'and the authorities showed great forbearance. They took into consideration that he did it on account of his wife; and then,' said he, 'I put my word in for him, too.'"

"Two years!" exclaimed Platónov.

"Two years," repeated Anícia Ivánovna. Then she went on, with an unconscious sarcasm, "Of course, it might have been kind on their part; all the same, it is fearfully long for a mother's heart to bear it!" As she said this, her thin, care-worn face twitched convulsively, and the tears ran down it in a stream. "Only to think," she added, "that he was to have graduated from the Medical Academy this spring."

The sight of so much human wretchedness affected Platónov more than he cared to show. He felt both pity and indignation.

The old woman might have guessed something of what was passing in his mind, for she turned the conversation to Tanya. "God bless her," said she; "if it had not been for her, I don't know how I should have done, not being able myself to earn anything now that I am crippled."

Platónov here recalled one of the main purposes of his visit. Drawing from his pocket a roll of notes, and placing it in her hand, he said, "Anícia Ivánovna, you will please accept that. It is from Tatiána Vladímirovna."

In the old woman's eyes the amount looked enormous. "Why," she expostulated, "we had some money from her only last week."

"That does n't matter. You are sure to find use for it. Take it for Tanya's sake."

Anícia Ivánovna seemed still undecided what to do. "I don't know whether Serguéi would like me to receive it," she began. "You see, two years ago last Christmas, I had some trouble through accepting money in a mistake. I sat here all alone with these two children, and my heart was almost breaking to see them hungry. We had n't a kopek to buy milk; they would n't trust us at the shop. My son and Anna Petrónna were both out, — gone, I think, to try to borrow some money from people as poor as ourselves. All at once a gentleman entered my room and gave me his name. He was well dressed and seemed kind in his looks. He left us forty roubles as a present. You may imagine how glad I was! I ran to our landlord and paid the back rent; then I paid all our debts at the shop, and had money enough to buy meat and milk, as well as cakes for the children. It was a regular holiday for us. In the

middle of it, Anna and Serguéi came back. I told them quickly about it all, and gave them the name of the good gentleman. Oh, if you could have seen Anna's face as she looked at me! If you could have heard her storm! 'He's a villain, — a paid spy!' — she cried; 'never did an honest act in all his life! Mother, we can't eat food from the hands that lash us. You ought to have thrown the money back in his face.' Yes, she talked like that, and went on crying and wringing her hands. It made me ill to see her. Then Serguéi came to me and said, in a low voice, 'Mother, how could you take money from a stranger, without knowing what kind of a man he was?'"

Platónov listened patiently until the old woman had finished her recital. Then, with a smile on his handsome face, he said, "My dear Anícia Ivánovna, there is no danger now. They won't be offended with you. I knew Anna Petróvna very well when she was in Switzerland."

"Oh, did you?" suddenly asked the old woman, with a pleased expression in her face. "Well, if you are one of us, I will take it, and God bless you for your kindness."

An hour later, as Platónov was emerging from beneath the gloomy passageway of the lodging-house he had just visited, a group of men closed up around him; he felt the strong grip of a hand on each arm, and heard a voice telling him that he

was arrested. The propagandist offered no resistance. The disaster that seemed so long to menace him had fallen: he was not taken by surprise. In a vague, obscure, but painful way, he had expected it. Now that the cloud of anxiety which had brooded over him so long was at last broken, he felt even a sense of relief. Muttering between his teeth the word "Kismet!" he thought of Tanya as he accompanied his captors along the same muddy, ill-lighted, and badly smelling Astrakhánskaya which the young girl had traversed only a few months before.

Kol slaven nash Gospod v Ziónyé! ("How glorious is our Lord in Zion!") The clock in the tower of the fortress of Peter and Paul was chiming this well-known melody when the door of one of the lower rows of cells in that famous prison opened to receive a new inmate. The man had no sooner entered than the heavy framework snapped behind him, and he was alone. The loneliness of his position affected him, but something impressed him still more profoundly, — it was the deep quiet that reigned everywhere. Throughout his way to the cell he had been reminded by the multifarious movements and activities of prison life that he was still a denizen of the world of sounds; but all this ceased with the turning of the lock, while in its place came so sudden and profound a silence that

it seemed to him like the loss of a sense. He could only stand still and listen intently, as if to test his strange incapacity, or to note from what direction sound might next again smite his ear. Again and again he strained himself to catch the slightest indication. He listened in vain. His very steps made no noise on the padded floor; while through the thick walls—also padded to prevent intercommunication between the prisoners by knocking—not a tremor, not a sign of life made its way in from the outside world. It was as if that one cell constituted the universe, and he were its single occupant.

Sound was not to be his companion. What, then, of light? His place of prison, which he gradually found the curiosity to examine, was a chamber not much more than twelve feet square, with a rather high ceiling; at the end farthest from the door lay a rough, wooden bed; in the wall above this, close to the roof, a heavily barred window, furnished with thick glass panes, looked out into a quadrangle, but gave no glimpse of sky, and relieved the obscurity within only in such a way as to make it more evident. Yet there was another source of light which the inmate had not at first noticed. Turning to the door, he observed a spy-hole through which rays were entering; then he remembered that it was the prison custom to keep the corridors brilliantly illuminated. Was

not this something to be grateful for? Yet as he gazed, an eye suddenly darkened the orifice. It was an eye of suspicion and hostility, and it followed the hapless prisoner with its cynosure until the little light that remained in the cell soon became a curse. The inmate did not so much shrink from its inquisitorial power as he revolted at its humiliation. It reminded him that he was at the mercy of the power behind that eye. Would he not be safe from its intrusions after nightfall?

Alas! the night brought a new irritation. For as day faded from the little window, the wisp of light at the spy-hole broadened and brightened. It streamed in with a tremulous, agitated radiance; it turned and coiled near him like a living thing, — nay, it grew ere long to have some mysterious respiration of its own, as if to warn the inmate that he was no longer alone. So at last, in the over-tried imagination of the mind-sick prisoner it became a new inquisitor, taking the place of the secret eye that had been fixed upon him during the day. Well, indeed, he knew that he could not escape it. For when he laid him down, it was there, ghostlike, shining in upon him; and when, waking from dreams an instant to turn on his hard bed, it was still there, waxing and glooming, waning and brightening, with a mysterious, searching potency that seemed to say, “Ah, I am with you always!”

Little wonder that the silence-cursed, light-tormented prisoner looked eagerly forward to the final disposal of his "case." He did not deceive himself. He knew the method, and had already reconciled himself to the result. Who his accusers were was to him immaterial, for well he knew that they would never be required to confront him. There would be no jury, — of that he felt certain. There would not be even a tribunal. Least of all would his "crime" or his "sentence" be noised abroad in the press. The fate that awaited him was not a trial, but simply a destination. What could that destination be other than Siberia?

Thus while, through the weary, heart-sick vigils of many days and nights, the new inmate waited and waited, many times the bells in the clock tower of the fortress chimed "How glorious is our Lord in Zion!" and many times pedestrians walking on the other side of the Neva heard the melodious sounds. Some listened with a merry jest; others turned away with a shudder; still others gnashed their teeth and cursed.

CHAPTER XVII

A MESSAGE FROM THE TRANSBAIKÁL

THREE or four months have elapsed since Plátónov's departure from E——. It is now spring along the lower Volga. The skies have already begun to clothe themselves in a deep Italian blue ; the air has grown warm, and balmy as the breath of the steppes. In the great bend the ice is all melted, and the swollen waters, while they lazily climb the cliff of the right bank, are just as surely if slowly extending their empire along the flats of the opposite shore. The river, which has now become a flood, preserves only one suggestion of the winter over which it has triumphed, and that is to be glimpsed in midstream, where the southward flowing current bears on its bosom a train of ice-floes still appareled in the glistening habiliments of frost.

A spectacle like this, with its promise of new life for earth and sky, is a delight to all Volga dwellers. Yet there was one who contemplated it with quite other feelings. The pensive spectator was Tanya herself. Attracted by the beauty of the morning, she had wandered forth, book in

hand, to a little-frequented pathway on the cliff, and there stood looking out across the expanse of newly stirring waters. Her gaze had instinctively turned itself towards the north, as if from that direction was to come her hope; but when she saw the ice-floes, her eyes shrank from the glittering envoys as if they had suddenly chilled her to the heart. Though far from being superstitious, the girl was reminded of an episode in her life as a student at St. Petersburg. It was then also springtime, just after the break-up of the Neva; and the ice — how vividly she remembered it! — was coming down from Lake Ládoga in great shining masses, while crowds of idlers were watching the spectacle from the bridges and from either shore. Two of her fellow students made a vow to be the first to cross the Neva after the *débâcle*, and having joined them, there she was, rising and falling on the swell as the strong arms of a boatman guided them through the pack. When the crunching of the ice was at an end, and the boat had reached smoother water, the girl clapped her hands delightedly in response to the people who were cheering them from the Nikoláievsky Bridge. Just at that moment the frowning outlines of the fortress of Peter and Paul came into view. Then all the stories that had ever been told her about the gloomy prison crowded into her mind, until the thought of them banished her gayety, and made

her sadly eager to reach her lodgings. So now, by a natural association, the girl thought of him who, whatever his fate, whether good or evil, must, as she knew, be living somewhere a life of anxiety and danger. No intelligence of him had reached her for weeks ; and in the last day or two of painful suspense, strange fancies had begun to haunt her. True, she had been informed of his peril and escape in Moscow, but she had heard nothing of him since his departure for St. Petersburg. He must have written to her, she reasoned, on reaching the capital ; if so, what had become of the letters ? Did his silence mean that all was well, or did it signify some evil fortune which it was beyond his power to share with her ?

In the midst of these musings Tanya heard steps near her, and on turning her head saw Mr. Forsyth. The schoolmaster greeted her with a pleasant smile. "Good-morning, Tatiána Vladímirovna. This looks refreshingly like spring."

"It does," she replied, returning his greeting. "But winter is not quite gone yet."

"You are right. The ice still lingers. Yet navigation has been open now for nearly a fortnight ; and yesterday, when one of the passenger boats steamed by, with a band of music playing on board, one needed only to shut one's eyes to think it was midsummer, instead of the end of April."

“Have you anything like this in England?” the girl asked.

Forsyth was quick to see that, with the changing season, she too had undergone a *renaissance*. Tanya was standing before him with the graceful lines of her body silhouetted against the gray cliff; and as she tried to shade her eyes from the early sun, a light breeze played with a tuft of hair on her forehead. There was a healthy glow in her cheeks; the red lips were slightly parted; the soft brown eyes, despite their far-away look, seemed to hold a world of light and meaning. As Forsyth gazed, he felt, not alone the indefinable attraction of a beautiful body, but still more the fascination of a lovely human soul still in many ways mysterious to him. Ah, it was this mystery, this inaccessibleness, that piqued, while it pained him; and as he watched her mobile face, the desire to become lord of that soul again rose for a moment within him.

“Have you anything like this in England?” she repeated.

“Pardon my inattention,” he quickly said. “No; nothing like that. We have, of course, no rivers so grand as the Volga; and then, such as we have rarely freeze in winter.”

As Forsyth spoke, the book which the girl held slipped from her grasp, and would have rolled down the cliff had not the schoolmaster promptly

recovered it. He recognized the volume as his own.

"If you have no great rivers," she resumed, smiling her thanks, "you have great men, — and great poets, *par excellence!*"

"So you have been reading Shelley?" he asked, with a secret sense of satisfaction.

"Yes; in fact, I have read scarcely anything else since you lent me the book."

"I hope you like him. I have found him a favorite with many Russians."

"Why should he not be? A spirit like Shelley's cannot be limited by nationality, or even by race. He belongs to educated minds the world over; but he belongs, I think, particularly to us Russians."

"I am glad to hear you say so. The more because, as a rule, Shelley's world is too rich and picturesque for foreigners to orient themselves easily in it. Even some of our own people don't always find themselves at home there. To the young Slav mind, with its realistic tendencies, so bold a thinker as Shelley must be especially congenial."

"If one thing more than another touches me in Shelley," added Tanya, "it is the healthy melancholy which pervades his writings. You have your *Weltschmerz* in Byron, pessimistic and often harmful. The sadness in Shelley is a spiritualized sadness, — the melancholy of optimism, if I may so express it, that, while being true to life, elevates, gives courage, inspires hope."

"You find Shelley helpful, then?"

"Yes," replied the girl slowly, — "there are situations in life when we need such support as even poets can give us."

She had turned to go, and they were now walking together along the cliff side. Forsyth felt keenly enough the personal note in the girl's observation, and was about to make some commonplace reply when his companion suddenly asked about the exiles. Had he heard anything new? Did he know of any changes? Was there any word from Moscow or St. Petersburg?

Since leaving her lodgings at Varvára Máximovna's, Tanya had received occasional calls from most of the exiles, but she had ceased to attend the customary meetings of the colony. It was, therefore, not improbable that the schoolmaster, who was rarely absent from those gatherings, might have heard something of importance that had not yet entered the current of ordinary gossip. Yet he well knew, as the girl questioned him, that the news she desired so ardently was not news in general, but news regarding Platónov. Nor was he slow to observe that while Tanya did not obtrude her special interest, she did not make the slightest effort to conceal it. Her attitude towards him, then, had not changed by one jot: she treated him simply as a friend, and did this with such an utter lack of self-consciousness as made the chance

of her discovering his passion less likely than ever. What, moreover, could he tell her? With the exception of some idle gossip, he knew nothing that she did not know herself. The whole colony had heard of the escape of Platónov, but no word of him had yet been received from the capital.

There was really nothing to say; yet he had not the heart to tell her this. Indeed, he felt himself impelled somehow to inspire the desponding girl with a hopeful view of the situation. Well enough he knew that his open assumption of her interest in Platónov, while it could cause her no embarrassment, would inevitably rob his own suit of its *raison d'être*. Yet he was ready to make the sacrifice. His passion had already passed through its *Sturm-und-Drang* period; and though it still swayed him, he had grown more mild and patient than ever under its rule. His wild resolve to declare himself after Platónov's departure had, after much struggle, been at last put firmly aside. He could not further doubt the state of the girl's mind: nay, he had finally reconciled himself to the thought that she was already pledged irrevocably to another; and now, if he could not win her love, he wished that at least he might deserve her gratitude. It was in this unselfish mood, therefore, that he hastened to urge upon Tanya the unwisdom of much of her premature anxiety. He reminded her, for example, that there was no

legitimate ground for alarm in the non-arrival of letters from St. Petersburg. One engaged in a secret enterprise like that of the propagandist might be loth to send information of himself through the post ; it was, at any rate, quite within reasonable probability that Platónov was waiting for an opportunity to communicate with his friends by some trusty messenger. Forsyth urged these and like arguments with force and warmth, so that by the time the strollers had reached the Známenskaya, the anxious expression was gone from Tanya's face, and the girl had recovered much of her normal cheerfulness.

A trial now impended that was to test her energy and devotion to the utmost. Her heart, as the reader knows, was bound up in little Assya, and it was her custom to snatch a glimpse of the child every morning as Matriona took her out for promenade. One day in July she missed the girl and her charge ; the next Assya still failed to appear ; and as she remained missing on the third or fourth, Tanya accosted the domestic and learned what had happened. "The child's down with typhus fever," Matriona said. "Typhus fever!" Why had they not told her before ? Tanya hastened to the house across the Známenskaya. She found Varvára Maxímovna incapacitated, by an attack of nervous prostration, from every kind of attention to the patient : well-nigh oblivious of her

surroundings, the woman was pacing the floor of her room, moaning piteously. The father had preserved his calmness, but had a distressed look in his face that was painful to observe. At the sight of the visitor he brightened a little, took her hand, and shook it warmly in both of his; but no word escaped him. Seeing the desolation around her, Tanya promptly raised the suffering child in her arms; its head resting against her shoulder, her own cooler cheek pressed against its burning brow, she began to walk to and fro in the chamber that had not long before served her as a study. It was while she was thus engaged that the doctor entered.

"Tatiána Vladímirovna," he began, with a certain professional severity in his manner, "that disease is highly contagious. Are you mad to expose yourself to danger so needlessly? Go home at once, and do not return."

"Doctor," replied the girl, in a quiet, yet firm voice, "somebody must care for this child, and I have resolved to nurse it through its sickness. You will, therefore, permit me to remain."

"Stay, then, and die," was the hasty retort, "but do not hold me responsible." Having thus vindicated his professional authority, the doctor turned his attention to the little patient.

Then followed, for Tanya, as well as for the afflicted parents, nights of watching and days of

fear long drawn out. A young organism lay fighting for life against fearful odds, and for more than a week of delirium the result trembled in the balance. Sometimes the fever would abate, as if the enemy had drawn off, or was about to surrender; yet under cover of darkness it would return with new virulence and determination until the hope of the watchers fled with the morning light. There was no want of skill, — least of all any want of attention, — yet disheartening relapses came that science could not cope with, and the almost sleepless doctor himself began to despair of his patient. With such a temperature as that, the crisis was soon reached: thus it came about that one bright morning Tanya knew that her devotion had been unavailing. The struggle was over. Death, which love conquers so often that the race may continue, had here conquered love. The wild fever had raged itself out; the last quick breath had been heaved; the patient little face lay now in waxen beauty upturned, the once mobile features forever still, yet fixed also forever in loving hearts with characters of imperishable light.

And now that a ripple had passed from the house of grief into the shoreless sea of eternity, every one knew that there was no chastener like death. On mother and father the calamity fell with crushing weight. Tanya had hoped against hope. She had battled for the young life as if

it had been her own. Exhausted by her vigils, mentally weary and heart-sick, — herself reeling under the blow that had so cruelly wounded the parents, — she felt that her mission was now at an end. It was, indeed, time to return. Already sharp pains, shooting through her head, warned the girl that she needed rest, and that right quickly. Hastily donning hat and cape, and taking one long look at the dead face, she stole into the street. Again she was in the world, — the gay, laughing world, — the world that to private sorrow must always seem hard and cruel. She knew that it was only indifferent. It was the great world, after all, doing its business in a large way, — taking death, like life, for granted, and leaving each little corner of the universe to do its own weeping as it would. She felt that at the heart of it, somehow or other, this grand indifference must be right. For if it were not, what encouragement would there be to live at all?

Tanya's dower of intellectual sanity had not been bestowed upon her for nothing. As she hurried across the thoroughfare, a man dressed in artisan's clothes, who had been standing just beyond the Buláiev house, followed her rapidly. The girl was about to enter the gate of her lodgings when the stranger reached the sidewalk. Looking round cautiously to see if he was observed, then taking off his cap, the man asked, "Can you tell

me where I may find Tatiána Vladímirovna Lobanóva ? ”

“ That is my name,” she replied.

“ I have a letter for you,” he went on, adding in a lower tone, “ from a friend.” He drew an envelope from an inner pocket and handed it to her.

She took it mechanically, but with a sudden sinking of the heart that drew all the blood from her face. Before she could say a word, the man was gone. Dazed, — like one in a dream, — she crossed the threshold and entered the house.

“ Darling, you are looking like a ghost ! ” Marussia exclaimed. “ How is little Assya ? ”

“ All is over,” Tanya answered wearily. “ She is dead.”

Quickly the girl passed into her room, convulsively tore open the envelope, and with one glance at the missive within, staggered and fell.

When Marussia came in, accompanied by Forsyth, who happened to be making a call on the Nerodas, they found Tanya lying across the bed. The face was of a ghastly paleness ; the eyes were fixed, and had a wild, staring expression. The hands felt cold, but the forehead was burning. Tenderly they moved the girl to a more comfortable position ; then Forsyth went away in search of a doctor.

On his return he noticed an envelope tightly

grasped in the hand of the girl, and saw, lying near her on the floor, a folded sheet of paper. Stooping half mechanically, he picked it up, and caught sight of the words, written in pencil: —

“ Good-by, my love. To Zabaikál. V. P.”

Forsyth's heart almost stood still as he recognized the writing and initials of Platónov. This, then, was the message which he had advised Tanya to wait for, — this the consolation he had so glibly, so thoughtlessly foretold! Ah! his fears had not deceived him: he knew now what moral pangs that harmless-looking note had added to the throes of a painful physical crisis itself sufficiently severe. Yet he had long ceased to think selfishly of his friend; and in the spectacle of her devotion and suffering, — the one so obviously the outcome of the other as to be its very martyrdom, — his heart swelled towards the girl with a pitying tenderness. Nor could he think unmoved of the sudden calamity that had overtaken Platónov. The selfish rivalry, once his attitude towards the propagandist, now returned to him charged with a painful burden of remorse. He blamed himself bitterly; nay, the thought of the man who had gone to his ruin for the sake of an ideal cast a light on his own comfortable, luxurious, well-nigh frivolous existence that made him shrink from it with a feeling of contempt. He owed these two something already. The example of their sufferings, of their patience,

their heroism, was surely worth more to him than all the rest of his Russian experiences. So, as he awaited the arrival of the doctor, the course which he would follow arose and delineated itself clearly in his mind. The lower motives had all gone: he felt now but one desire, — the longing to help and succor the sufferers to the utmost of his power.

“What could be expected?” reasoned the man of science, after he had diagnosed the malady of his patient. “You can’t breathe typhus fever germs without getting some of them into your blood. But these young people know more than the doctors, — that is, until they need us. Then they need us very badly.”

“Is there danger?” asked Forsyth.

“Danger enough, though we need not despair. The girl has a fine organism, and if everything goes well, she may come out all right. Of course, in a case like this, it is best not to be too confident.” The speaker gave a few directions to Marussia, then hurried in search of a nurse.

That same evening Forsyth found Tanya sufficiently recovered from her collapse in the morning to converse with him for a few moments. The sight of her pale face and trembling hands made him regret his intrusion; but there was no time to lose. Bringing her the letter, and explaining how he had found it, the schoolmaster availed himself of his privilege as a friend to speak to her with

freedom. He tried, in the first place, to convince her that the situation might not be so bad as it seemed. It was clear from the message, he reasoned, that Platónov had not yet reached his destination; as, moreover, he had evidently learned of it by accident, — it not being the official custom to inform administrative exiles in advance of their place of banishment, — the note might just as well have been written in St. Petersburg as anywhere else. Forsyth had powerful friends in the capital, and if the propagandist was still there, something might be done in his behalf immediately. Even if it should turn out that he was already on the *étape* road to Siberia, there were ways of interference that, even if they involved greater delay, might prove in the end just as efficacious.

Tanya listened, languidly at first; but as Forsyth went on, her face brightened. Finally she fixed her eyes on him with an expression of eager interest. “And is there still hope, Mr. Forsyth?” she faintly asked.

“You know our English proverb? — ‘While there is life, there is hope.’ To-day,” he went on, “is Tuesday. The steamer will call here to-morrow night. On Thursday morning I shall be at Tsarítsyn. By taking express trains wherever possible, I shall be able to reach St. Petersburg by Saturday. The rest of my task will be easy.”

“How good you are!” said the girl, with a look

of deep gratitude in her worn features. "And will you do so much for me — for him?"

"So much and more, Tatiána Vladímirovna, — everything that a true friend is capable of!"

The sick girl detained him but a few moments longer. It was to speak about Sonya. The banker's daughter, according to the latest news from the capital, was suffering from a severe relapse. Her malady, diabetes, had now complicated itself with consumption, and the invalid, though conscious enough, was in imminent danger. Tanya simply wanted Forsyth to take a message to the sufferer, — a message that, notwithstanding all its sadness, was yet full of encouragement and love.

On the following evening he looked in to bid her good-by. There was anxious foreboding at his heart as he crossed the threshold of her room. Lost to him though she was, he could no more bear the idea of her death than if he had been her accepted lover. To the wracking thought that this might be the last time he would see her alive was added the not less painful consciousness of her evident inability to recognize him. The delirium of the day had left the patient in a state of helpless exhaustion. She lay motionless, her bare white arms outstretched; through the disarranged coverings the graceful throat peeped forth, throbbing with the fires of fever; on the open neck, held by a tiny chain of gold, glistened the girl's

baptismal cross. The forehead was like marble, but a faint bloom irradiated the cheeks. It seemed like sleep, — it might have been death itself, — yet Forsyth thought he had never before seen her so beautiful. Suddenly, as he gazed, the patient's right hand moved convulsively ; it was raised, — it seemed to be beckoning to him. Sinking to his knees, he took the hand in his own and covered it with kisses. Then with one farewell look at the unconscious figure he was leaving among strangers, and leaving perhaps forever, he hurried from the room. The same night, plunged in thought that made sleep out of the question, the schoolmaster paced the deck of the steamer that was bearing him northward.

On the day of Forsyth's departure, the fair young blossom that had been so rudely plucked from the stem of life found a resting-place in the picturesque burying-ground on the cliff. As the disturbed clods fell back upon the little pink coffin in which lay the remains of Assya, Buláiev gently led the weeping mother from the spot now sacred to her beyond all others. Broken, humiliated, penitent, she knew nothing, felt nothing, save the overwhelming wretchedness of her bereavement ; and when, reaching their rifled home, the parents saw the empty crib and abandoned playthings, — memorials of the heart to be thenceforth treasured

up as priceless relics of their dead darling, — the unhappy mother could no longer control herself. Clinging to her husband, she sobbed out in an agony of remorse all the story of her weakness. Not a fault she could think of was passed over. Her rash, insane passion for Platónov, — the wicked vow she had taken on the head of her child, — her despicable behavior to Tanya, — all the frivolity and idleness of the existence she had led at E——, these were darkly depicted in this impulsive burst of self-accusation. Most of all, she blamed herself for the suffering which her selfish conduct had caused a patient, noble husband. She could only ask his forgiveness; she could only assure him that her foolish passion had gone out of her life forever, and that her heart lay buried in the newly filled grave on the Volga side. So for Buláiev, who found a certain relief from sorrow in the effort to soothe it, the day of grief became in some sort a day of reconciliation. It had been decreed that he should lose the child; yet the same fate which thus lacerated his heart anew beyond all possibility of healing had closed up its older wound by restoring the wife.

CHAPTER XVIII

“A VERY DANGEROUS KIND OF MAN”

FORSYTH had ample time, long before reaching St. Petersburg, not only to consider from all points of view the nature of his mission, but also to weigh the chances of its success. The first flush of his decision having passed, he now found himself free to face what was a serious, as it promised to prove a difficult enterprise. On what ground might interference be attempted on behalf of such a man as Platónov? Knowing well enough that the propaganda to which his friend had devoted himself was illegal, and would of itself justify his arrest in any part of the empire, Forsyth was just as well aware that no plea urging the *prima facie* harmlessness of such an agitation from a west-European point of view would avail in the slightest. The most serious consideration of all, as the schoolmaster felt it to be, was his ignorance of Platónov's history. Quite apart from any recent offense, the propagandist might be compromised in twenty ways of which Forsyth thus far knew nothing. His sojourn for several years abroad; his evident knowledge of the Russian prison sys-

tem ; the reticence which he had always shown in speaking of his earlier life, — all this seemed to indicate that at some period of it he must already have been in collision with the authorities. On what ground, moreover, could a stranger plead for a man like Platónov save on the ground of friendship ; and would not the very suspicion aroused by such a friendship operate as a bar ? Forsyth already knew too much of the injury that might result to wholly innocent people from mere acquaintance with political offenders not to be alive to so manifest a source of danger ; but though ready to take any risk of the kind, he did not, as an Englishman, anticipate that it would be great. He trusted to his friends at the British Embassy and in the English colony to “ legitimize ” his interest in Platónov, as far as that were possible ; and he would also depend upon them to guide him in any inquiries or representations he might decide to make. This was as far as his plans carried him for the present.

As soon as the schoolmaster had set foot again in the capital, he hastened to the house in the Litéinia. Naturally eager to see his sister, after an absence from her of many months, he also wished to deliver as promptly as possible Tanya’s message to her friend. He saw his sister, indeed ; but the message was too late. Sonya was no more. Her gentle, loving spirit had passed away on the

very day of his departure from E——, and now the much-tormented body was at rest in the Vólkhov Cemetery. Miss Forsyth did not attempt to describe the magnificent funeral: she spoke only of the prolonged illness and its closing days; of the girl's exceeding patience and gentleness to the end; then of the banker's grief and prostration.

This second experience of death in the circle of his friends made the schoolmaster so sick at heart that he could remain no longer than was necessary to obtain an appointment with Líkhachov for the morrow. His first care now was to prepare himself for his projected application to the authorities. General Windt had advised him to have nothing to do with under-officials, but to go directly to one who, at this time, had absolute control of the political police and of administrative procedure in general, — the Minister of the Interior himself. As this counsel was approved by all those on whose judgment he felt he could rely (though not one of them held out any hope that his application would be successful), Forsyth made his plans accordingly. First came his interview with the banker, — a meeting which left on him an impression rather painful than otherwise. Líkhachov's manner was by no means wanting in friendly warmth, yet bodily fatigue and mental suffering had changed his appearance to a degree for which the schoolmaster was not prepared. It was not only that

the lapse of a year had perceptibly whitened his beard and hair, planted deep furrows in his forehead, and given a perceptible stoop to his body, — his mind seemed less alert than formerly ; even his speech showed signs of quickly advancing age.

After commonplaces had been exchanged, Forsyth reported the little which, beyond mere financial arrangements, he had been able to do at E—— ; in return, the banker described the efforts that had been put forth on behalf of Tanya in St. Petersburg, adding that, as nothing came of them, they had at last been discontinued. Then followed a pause during which Líkhachov, with head bent and eyes cast down, seemed to be revolving in his mind the method, rather than the matter, of some further communication which he wished to make to his visitor. Forsyth would have taken his departure had not the peculiar manner of the banker detained him. Finally, Líkhachov raised his head and spoke. He began by saying that he greatly regretted the failure of his efforts to obtain the release of Tatiána Lobanóva from further detention. Sharing, as he had always done, his daughter's feelings of admiration and solicitude towards the girl, he had long deliberated over the possibility of coming to her aid in some other way ; and since Sonya's death his desires on the subject had taken definite form. What he wished was to do something to secure the girl — for the imme-

diate future, at any rate.— from cares of a financial character. His plan, in fact, was to place at her disposal — in Sonya's name — a sum of money adequate to cover all her needs for several years to come, trusting that in such a provision, offered not as a gift, but rather as a memorial of her dead friend, Tatiána Vladímirovna would find nothing indelicate or objectionable. He had taken the first opportunity to broach the matter to Forsyth: indeed, his only purpose in detaining the schoolmaster was to obtain his favorable judgment and coöperation. Forsyth at once signified his approval of the scheme; and after half an hour of consultation, in which the details of the proposed transfer were settled, the men separated.

The same day Forsyth learned that the Minister of the Interior was in the habit of holding fortnightly receptions in the Mokhóvaya, where it was his duty, as representative of the Emperor, to meet the people, — to hear their complaints, receive their petitions, and redress their wrongs. By closely watching the columns of the official newspaper, the schoolmaster was enabled to ascertain the date of the next reception; and at the appointed time, armed with letters of introduction from highly placed personages in the capital, he set out for the Mokhóvaya. Pushing his way along a thoroughfare which seemed blocked from end to end with carriages in waiting, he found the temporary

quarters of the Minister in some chambers on the second floor which had been rented for the purposes of the reception. The first and largest of the rooms had been reserved for the visitors, who there waited to be called, in batches of a dozen at a time, into the receiving chamber. A third room, last of the suite, was used as the Minister's retiring apartment. In none of the chambers was furniture visible, not even a chair; the windows were open to the street, the gas chandeliers hung covered with linen wrappings, — the entire interior looked as if it had just been deserted by some St. Petersburg family *en voyage*.

The assembly-room, when Forsyth entered, was a buzz of expectation. It contained with difficulty a motley throng whose multifarious elements vividly suggested the variety of social and official classes in Russia, — army generals, ablaze with gold lace and decorations; priests in flowing robes and tall hats; functionaries from a dozen departments of the capital; country nobles from the provincial assemblies, mayors of distant cities, village elders, peasant representatives of the communes, together with an indescribable complex of innkeepers, commercial travelers, soldiers, justices of the peace, lawyers, even *droshky* drivers.

Forsyth lingered long in order that, being the last to state his business, he might have more privacy and a longer time in which to transact it.

When called into the reception-room with the final batch, he took up a position that afforded opportunity of easy and undisturbed observation. About a dozen persons, arranged in a sort of half circle, stood in the centre of the apartment. The Minister had his back towards the waiting group and was reading a document. When he faced the visitors, the schoolmaster saw a figure likely to impress the most careless observer. It was that of a man evidently past middle age, in whom, nevertheless, the spare frame, the alertness of movement, the healthily colored cheek and the keen eye above it spoke of a vigorous habit of both body and mind; while to an imagination sufficiently active, the clean-shaven features, which included a forehead broad rather than high, a fairly prominent nose, and strongly marked eyebrows, revealing ascetic tendencies, would have suggested that, had such a functionary failed as a statesman, he might have won unquestionable success as an ecclesiastic.

A few minutes' observation sufficed to reveal the Minister's conspicuous tact as a diplomatist, but more than all, the felicity of his method as a mediator between the people and their sovereign. The natural severity of his manner relaxed into a smile as he came forward to each petitioner and asked, "Well, sir; in what can I serve you?" He would then patiently listen to the story, give the needed

promise or information, consult with his secretary on knotty points, or, failing the means of prompt decision, cause his assistant to record the case for future investigation. Some of those present had come with demands that could not be granted; yet even these the Minister seemed not to have the heart to disappoint. While he did not gloss over difficulties in the way, he always contrived to give the assurance that whatever was possible would be done. To the forward and loquacious he was reserved, yet affable; the excessively timid or abashed he restored to their presence of mind by familiar and irresistible advances. In the Minister's reception, for example, of three peasants who had traveled all the way from the "government" of Perm to ask assistance in some affair of communal administration, his manner seemed to reach its extreme of tact and good-humor. Figures rougher or more rudely encased in sheepskin were perhaps never seen in the capital; they came forward with an embarrassment which, in that assembly of well-dressed people, quickly increased to trepidation. When the Minister turned to speak to them, the poor fellows fell on their knees before him. Quickly taking each *muzhik* by the hand, he raised the men to their feet. Then, assuming the broad and rollicking manner of the peasant, he addressed them in the language of their class, and with the aid of an appropriate joke, soon had the fearful delegates

in roars of laughter. In another case the Minister was called upon to consider the petition of a widow for the release of her son from what previous investigation had shown to be a sentence of imprisonment very doubtful in its justice, though perfect in its law. Knowing the facts, he refreshed himself regarding them by whispered consultation with his secretary, and then sent the woman away,—in tears of joy.

Forsyth followed the various features of the reception with a feeling akin to wonder, for he saw in them elements of a democratic simplicity that ran counter to all his preconceived ideas of Russian institutions, and had few parallels, as he well knew, even in the constitutionally governed countries of western Europe. When he came to study the Minister himself, his surprise increased. Was this mild-mannered diplomatist the originator of the much-decried classical system which "professors hated and students cursed"? Was this the man who, by his severity to political offenders, had "done more to create discontent and provoke retaliation than all the enemies of the government put together"? The schoolmaster was proceeding to revolve in his mind the chances of his own application when his reflections were cut short by the Minister himself, whose eye had fixed itself upon him with a keen, searching glance.

"I came," began Forsyth, "on behalf of one

Platónov, who was recently arrested here on, I think, a political charge."

"Platónov, Platónov," repeated the Minister musingly. He turned to his secretary, and the men conversed together in a low voice.

"You are an Englishman, I see," observed the official, facing Forsyth again.

"I am."

"And what may be the nature of your interest in this — person you inquire about?"

"I made his acquaintance some months ago — by a mere accident. As he seemed to me a man of education and refinement, — a superior kind of man, — I was very much surprised to hear of his arrest."

"A superior kind of man? A very dangerous kind of man!" replied the Minister sharply.

"Indeed?"

"A fugitive from justice. A plotter against the safety of the empire!"

"I had no idea of that," remarked Forsyth.

"His real name is not Platónov, but Orchidze," added the Minister. So saying, he handed back the letters; and then, without further ceremony, bowed his visitor to the door.

There the schoolmaster made a last stand. "Can nothing be done for him?"

"Nothing!" came the laconic answer. The good-humored smile had now vanished. The affa-

bility of the diplomatist was gone. The face of the Minister had set itself like a flint. Forsyth knew that there was no hope. He took his way from the Mokhóvaya with an aching heart. Yet his depression was not to last long. On reaching his hotel he found awaiting him a letter from E——. It brought word that the crisis was passed, and the patient slowly convalescing. In a moment Forsyth's imagination carried him again to the quaint city by the Volga side, and there he was telling Tanya of the disposition which the banker had made in her favor. Then, quick as a day-dream could formulate them, he was busy with new plans for her future and for that of Platónov.

CHAPTER XIX

CONSTANTINE'S PLUNGE INTO THE UNKNOWN

ABOUT the time John Forsyth returned to his lodgings after his unsuccessful interview with the Minister of the Interior, the gay Mathilde was awaiting a visitor at her apartments in the Offit-sérskaya. She looked bewitchingly pretty in her morning dress of *Cachemire des Indes*, the folds of which were confined at the slender waist by a broad belt of chased Caucasian silver. Half reclining on a couch upholstered in red velvet, the girl beat time for a while on the polished floor with the tips of her tiny Russia-leather slippers; she next approached the window, drew aside the heavy draperies, and peeped furtively into the street; then, with a look of impatience in the dainty features, fixed her gaze on the mantel clock. As nothing came of these instinctive efforts to hasten the march of events, Mathilde sank back upon the couch with a half whispered, half spoken, "*Pourquoi ne vient-il pas?*" and there composed herself for an idle morning reverie. The unstudied pose of the reclining figure set off the lines of the body with charming effect; while the small, rosy

lips, the clear pink of the face, the long, dreamy lashes, and the luxuriant ringlets framing the head with raven coils, completed a picture which seemed beautiful as a dream of innocent maidenhood.

What was Mathilde's reverie? The thoughts that occupied her were indeed of Constantine, yet they boded no good to him who would willingly have given her his life. For when the lad, months after the painful interview with his father, confided to Mathilde, in a moment of passionate grief, that there was a terrible secret in his family which might prevent him from inheriting a kopek, — a secret which she would have wrung from him had it not been for the promise given to the banker, — he showed at once his lack of worldly wisdom and the extent of his misguided trust. True, she had assured him, in reply to his eager question, that were he left penniless she would love him still; nor did he notice any diminution in the warmth of her caresses. Yet the pensive look in her face, had he seen it, might have warned him that his peace of mind had more to fear from the woman who now pledged to him her lasting fidelity than from all the rest of the world beside. Well the girl knew that she was the only being who made his empty life tolerable to him, for he had told her so, — nay, he had gone on, the last time he and she sat on that very sofa, to declare that were it not for his Mathilde —

It had not been necessary for him to complete the sentence. The look in his face was enough. The girl saw it, and for a moment even her callous nature was stirred. It was, indeed, only for a moment. The heartless egoism of the woman again resumed the upper hand, and Constantine had no sooner left her than she began to wonder why she had tolerated him so long. She now perceived how heartily tired she was getting of his dubious temper and fitful moods. *Décidément*, he was a bore even as a lover; but, *mon Dieu!* what kind of a husband would he make? She shrugged her dimpled white shoulders, still glowing with his kisses, and Constantine's fate was sealed. The siren must now look out for some one else to fascinate, and who could that other be if not Prince Viazémsky himself? This man was already over head and ears in love with her; the slightest sign would suffice to bring him to her feet. Then he was excessively vain as well as gallant; nothing would please him better than to snatch his prize from under the very eyes of Constantine. Yet it was not as his mistress that she proposed to celebrate her conquest. When she joined her fate with that of Prince Viazémsky, it would be as his lawful wife. On no other conditions, — *ma foi, non!* The only question was whether the gay *roué* loved her sufficiently to be willing to part with his freedom. As to income, she knew that, of the two men, Con-

stantine would have been the wealthier were his prospects certain. Viazémsky was undoubtedly a spendthrift, but there was enough of his fortune left to gratify all her tastes; and what with the *petites économies* Constantine's liberality had made possible, she would be rich — *oui, vraiment riche!* — to the end of her days. And then to be a princess; to have a crown on her carriage, and a lackey on the seat behind her when she went out riding! The very thought of such a consummation brought a new color into the girl's cheeks; it made her eyes dance and sparkle with excitement.

Mathilde was again dreaming of the dazzling figure she would cut as princess. A ring at the doorbell, breaking in upon her reverie, warned her that the visitor she expected was at hand. A moment later Prince Viazémsky came in. He was dressed with fashion-plate faultlessness, and wore a *boutonnière* in the lapel of his coat. In his hand he carried a bouquet of camelias. Stealthily approaching the couch, he laid the flowers at the feet of the beauty, saying, "This offering to my goddess!" Then, with a touch of sarcasm, he added, "By Jove, and most appropriate, too, Mathilde! Can you guess why?"

The girl did not move.

"Well, when I see you in those flowing white robes, I cannot help thinking of Iphigenia in Tauris. Believe me, my charming girl, the resemblance is perfect."

Mathilde pouted a little as she looked up, as much as to say, "Is that all?"

"Now here," Viazémsky went on, noticing the disappointment in her face, "you will find something more substantial." Drawing a handsome *écrin* from his pocket, and pressing its spring, he exposed to view a magnificent diamond *rivière* on a bed of pink satin. At the sight of so costly a present Mathilde's eyes opened widely, but she was careful in her surprise to suppress the cry of delight that had involuntarily risen to her lips.

"How beautifully they will sparkle on that exquisite neck of yours!" As he said this, the prince bent over the siren and kissed her repeatedly through the long, narrow opening in the bodice of her dress.

The girl at once rose to her feet, and with a haughty little wave of the hand, began: "Yes, *mon Prince*, they are magnificent; and yet I must refuse them."

Viazémsky, who noticed that she was all the while toying with the diamonds, seemed struck speechless. He let his eyeglass drop, then stared at the Frenchwoman. It was a gaze of blank amazement.

"Yes, I must refuse them," repeated Mathilde, "and let me tell you why. You don't quite understand me, *mon Prince*. You regard me as a sort of doll, or plaything, — a person without heart

or brains, whose business is simply to amuse. You give me credit for nothing else. But I, too, have a heart that feels and suffers." Here, with a melodramatic wave of the pretty hand, she pointed to her bosom. "Do you think," the Circe went on, with well-assumed dignity, "that I am to be bought? Do you suppose that I can be knocked down to the highest bidder? No," she added, standing erect, with her head thrown back a little, — "no, *mon Prince*, you are mistaken. What is past is past. I have feelings that can be wounded, and it is not possible for me to go through that suffering again. Of course, you know of Constantine, and how faithful he has been to me. Well, that is all over. Thanks to a cruel fate, he is mine no longer. There is some dreadful secret in his family that prevents him from marrying me."

"Well," interjected Viazémsky, who had been watching her with a look in which astonishment had gradually given place to mystification, — "and what is the upshot of all these fine speeches?"

"It is this, — that I will never belong to any other man save as his lawful wife."

The prince now recovered his equilibrium and replaced his eyeglass. Then he surveyed Mathilde with a hard, cynical smile, — the smile of a man of the world. "So, *ma petite*, the price of possessing you is marriage. Well, my dear, that shall be all just as you wish."

Mathilde looked up eagerly. He was evidently quite serious, for he went on : —

“I suppose I shall have to do it sooner or later. I might as well marry you, Mathilde. Only think what a jolly time we are going to have, — both perfectly *en accord*, you know! Of course, *ma chérie*, I shall be discreet enough after the honeymoon to please even you. I shan’t expect you to be a vestal. Oh, no!” Here he smiled again.

Mathilde now approached him. She felt all *attendrie*. She had gained her point. She could now depend on his sympathy. “Ah, *mon Coco*,” she began, “you don’t know how sensitive I am. It makes me enraged — *parfaitement* — to think that, as a *demi-mondaine*, I cannot have a footman behind my carriage. Then to see the sneering faces of those high-born dames who look down on me, though, if the truth be told, they are much worse than I. Only think of the Princess Vronsky, for example, who had her coachman for a lover; yet everybody honors and respects her. As for me” —

“But that’s all over, now,” said Viazémsky impatiently.

In the excess of her satisfaction, Mathilde suddenly threw her arms round his neck, and whispered in his ear: “*Mon brave, mon bon Coco, — comme je t’aime! comme je t’aime!* Now when shall it be?” she asked, aloud.

The prince was half amused, half provoked, by the transparent wiles of the siren ; but when he felt the clinging warmth of her well-rounded arms, the pressure of her head, now cushioning itself upon his breast, he trembled and said, “ Oh, we can appoint the wedding for the end of next week. The sooner, the better ! ”

When Viazémsky had departed, Mathilde put on her necklace of diamonds, and took in her hand the bouquet of camelias. Standing before the mirror, she contemplated herself long and admiringly. As she looked, it seemed as if, in a succession of images, the glass yielded up to her the whole story of her life. The half-naked, half-starved child, — the overworked and cruelly chastised apprentice, — the mistress and slave of Lukhyánov, — the adored idol of the guardsman, Constantine, — last of all, the wife of Prince Viazémsky, with the right to see a crown on her carriage, and have a footman behind her when she drove out. “ Princess Viazémsky ! ” she murmurs, — “ *ma foi, c’est magnifique !* ” Then she laughs aloud. With slender, trembling fingers, she plucks the costly flowers from the bouquet, and one by one casts them to the floor. And still she laughs, repeating, “ Princess Viazémsky ! Princess Viazémsky ! ”

The death of his sister had affected Constantine

much more deeply than even those who knew him best would have deemed possible. In his fondness for pleasure and general levity of temperament he had often been indifferent towards Sonya ; sometimes, in frolicsome moods, he had quizzed and plagued her. Yet he owed to her that soothing, softening influence which she had spread about his life at home ; while a certain half-maternal solicitude in the girl had gone far to make up to him that absence of a house-mother which had flung its shadow over the banker's establishment from the beginning. During her illness, especially in the later stages of it, they had spent a good deal of time together : he had chatted with her of an afternoon for hours ; had now and then brought her some book or magazine which he thought she might like ; he had read for her long and patiently. It was thus a real, though unmonstrative affection that he felt for her ; and so when the end came, it left him in very low spirits. Besides the domestic trouble, he had an outside anxiety of which the people at home knew nothing. The caprices of Mathilde were becoming a great trial to him ; moreover, the girl had begun to break her engagements, and then to make excuses for her neglect that were too transparent even for his indulgent good-nature. What her irregularities might portend, he had as yet no clear idea ; like all simple natures, the young man was generous

to a fault, and slow to suspicion. He had now more time than usual on his hands, and had got into the habit of spending an evening or two every week in the *Litéinia*. The banker had need of Constantine's society; the son seemed to obtain a kind of relief from his own troubles in these familiar talks with his father. Over a bottle of wine the men forgot for moments the loneliness of the home that still united them; and as the face of the younger man brightened, that of the elder would lose something of its settled, despairing gloom. Yet such brief gleams of sunshine did but serve to show how darkly the sky was overcast. Each of them had his own particular sorrow, which everybody knew; but beyond this the two bore a burden in common that was kept as a secret and jealously hidden from the world. Upon both rested the shadow of a wrong which neither could shake off.

One evening, when the banker and his son were sitting together, a servant entered with a letter for Constantine. Recognizing the handwriting of Mathilde, the young man was about to slip the missive into his pocket, with the intention of perusing it later, when his eye caught an embossed crown on the flap of the envelope. This excited his curiosity. He opened the letter. It ran : —

DEAR CONSTANTINE, — I am married to Prince Viazémsky. When you get this note, I shall be on my way abroad. You must not be angry with me, for you know I had to do something, and I could not marry you on account of that dreadful secret in your family. I shall always have a pleasant recollection of you. But now everything is over between us. So good-by!

M.

Constantine understood only the first two sentences. The rest swam before his eyes. Thrusting the letter into his pocket, he fell back in his chair, his hands shaking, his face deathly pale. The banker was about to call for assistance, but the young man quickly recovered himself and rose.

“I must go, father,” said he, in a husky voice.

“What is it, Costya?”

“Father,” groaned the lad, as he passed his hand over his forehead, “I cannot speak of it now. Afterwards I shall tell you all.” Bidding the banker an affectionate “Good-by,” Constantine stepped into the hall, put on his hat, descended the stairway, called a carriage, and drove to the well-known quarter in the Offitsérskaya. It did not take him long to find the janitor. This time, it was all true that she had written, — terribly, fatally true. She had gone away to be married to the prince only a few days before, and now she

was on the railway with him between St. Petersburg and Warsaw. The janitor knew because he had taken her luggage to the Warsaw Station, and had seen them off. The man added details about their good spirits and fondness for each other that made Constantine shiver as if an icy wind had struck him. He had heard enough. With a wild light playing in his eyes and a look of determination on his face, he returned to his lodgings. Opening the door with a latch-key, he passed swiftly and noiselessly to his own room. It was the work of a moment to light his lamp. Then, seating himself at his desk, he pulled out a drawer and drew forth a bundle of letters. They were the missives, daintily written and perfumed, which he had received from Mathilde. From one of the envelopes a lock of hair fell. He took it up and covered it with kisses. Then, having pressed the letters to his lips, inhaling again the aroma that had once intoxicated him, he returned them to their resting-place.

Constantine left his seat and began to pace the room. The abnormal activity of his mind now crowded into an instant the experiences of years. At first there was confusion: the thoughts and images chased each other irregularly through his brain. Then the stream clarified itself, and the guardsman was watching what seemed like a panorama of his past, made up, not of its general

features, but rather of its concrete incidents. All the scenes that had at one time or another deeply affected him now rose uppermost. The brain seemed to be giving up its dead ; and as the buried impressions were resurrected under the potent stress of an all-dominating thought, each stood forth in vivid light, and then as suddenly vanished to give place to others. Thus Constantine saw himself as a boy, just out of petticoats ; Nyanya was drawing the bedclothes tightly around him, pointing as she did so, with solemn look and uplifted finger, to the holy image, that his nightly prayer might not be forgotten. Again he was with his sister, somewhere in the country. It was summer time. After following a retreating butterfly, hats in hand, far over the fields, until they had lost themselves, they had wandered on and on through woods to the water's edge, and had come suddenly upon Nyanya and the blue, far-stretching Baltic. Next, school life had begun, and the boy's father had brought him with beaming face to the gymnasium, — an experience every detail of which, from his introduction to the director down to the last lesson, now rose vividly before him. It was also from this period that he remembered the odor of the sandalwood he had kept in his desk, and the delightful perfume of a flower which, as an adventurous lad, he had picked up in the Neva, whither it had been thrown to him by a girl from

one of the bridges. Later, his wild days in the regiment, and then —

Then the unbearable agony of life under the new conditions was again upon him. It was not merely that Mathilde had deceived him, — that he could have borne. He was not himself so free from reproach that the discovery of another's baseness could affect him profoundly. Still less was he shocked at the revelation of her infidelity, even with Viazémsky for the successful rival. There had been scarcely a moment throughout the history of Constantine's *liaison* in which he would not have been willing to purchase its continuance at whatever cost of honor and self-respect. Yet to have it suddenly terminated, and that by a series of disastrous incidents which not only destroyed his dream of a permanent union with her, but put Mathilde as completely beyond his reach as if she had been transported to another planet, — this strained his emotional nature to the breaking point.

And now, with a dreadful thought in his mind which he had as yet only vaguely outlined to himself, Constantine braced himself up for a last effort. He did not want to give up the world, yet felt that its hold on him was giving way. Not only was the passion for Mathilde his master, — it had taken such deep root in him as to be the one absorbing interest, to endanger which was to

imperil life itself. It had reconciled him to an existence of empty routine and self-punishing dissipation ; in the later days, it had been the one ray of light in a sky which his father's disclosure had well-nigh filled with the gloom of despair.

The end had come, and Constantine knew it. A little longer he struggled, like a man who struggles with the ocean that is to engulf him, snatching at the dancing starbeam which in the darkness plays upon its surface, as if that has power to stay his descent. For moments Mathilde was there again, beckoning to him, — so close that he could almost touch her. Then a whirlwind seemed to carry her away to infinite distances. For moments the thought came up from the deeps swirling around him that life might yet have pleasure for him, — if he could only wait ; yet they were the same deeps that massed over and around him the world of agony which in the future would be, must be, his. Then painful and more painful the stress, deeper and more deep the gloom, until Constantine found himself caught up and borne along by a sudden deadly impulse which he tried no more to resist. Opening a cupboard, he drew something forth. There was an explosion, — a stunning, blinding blow, — and the room was bespattered with blood and brains. . . . A moment or two later, a servant peeped in fearfully, only to rush out again with a shriek. Then other ser-

vants came, to be followed, after much delay, by a doctor and the police.

It was the evening of the funeral, and Constantine already lay by the side of his sister in the Vólkhov Cemetery. The splendid ceremonials of the church were over; the regulation dinner to the mourners and friends had been eaten; and though a faint odor of incense still floated through the spacious apartments, the guests and clergy that filled them had all departed. Silence and the shadows of evening now reigned where, only a few hours before, had been the songs, the prayers, and the pomp of a religious spectacle.

Yet the banker's residence was not deserted. A deeper shadow than that of evening glided through the rooms until it reached the study of Líkhachov. Without pausing or knocking, it entered. At the table, his head bowed, his face buried in his hands, sat the banker. The nurse, for it was she, bent over the bowed form, and covered the head with kisses, moistening it as she did so with her tears. The banker did not move. She appealed to him in a low voice, touching his forehead. When he felt the caress of the dry, wrinkled hand, the bereaved father raised his head, the bloodless countenance was turned upwards, and from the scarcely moving lips, trembling through the half darkness, came just audibly a word that, while it

seemed freighted with the incense of prayer, was yet also full of the agony of confession, — the single word, “Mother!”

At the sound of this word, the old woman’s grief broke forth anew: at once she began to chant one of those improvised songs which mourners in Russia croon over their dead. Her head swaying to and fro, her voice thick with sobs, the old mother half sang, half recited: —

Our bright sun has set behind the dark earth, — no more will it
rise!

Nevermore will they return to us, our birdies, our beauties!
Never again shall we caress them as of old, our dear ones!
Buried they lie in the cold ground, and the darkness is o’er us!
All cold are our hearts. They have left us forever and ever!
Lost to us our happiness. Never more shall we behold them.
Gone is the light from our home; woe to us now and forever!
Sorrow and grief must be ours, and woe for ever and ever!

Gradually the voice died away into moaning, and this, too, finally ceased. Then the old woman laid her hand on the man’s shoulder and said: “‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ Yea, my son, we have done grievous wrong, and our sins have found us out. But the Almighty is merciful, grievously as we have sinned against Him, wicked though we have been. We must now ask his mercy, as sinners like us only can. No longer is it for us to continue here. Let us gird up our loins, let us take our staves, and let us go forth

from this vale of tears and misery, to seek far away rest not only for our bodies, but also for our souls. There, in prayer and penitence, must the rest of our days be spent, and maybe the Lord in his great goodness will give us peace even in this life." And from the overburdened heart of the conscience-stricken man there came the cry, "Amen!"

When the news of the suicide spread through the Liténia, the morning papers declared it to be "the result of a disappointment in love," and to this veritable statement of fact the gossips of the quarter added many fantastic details in the way of embellishment. They were much nearer the mark when, some days after the funeral, they helped to circulate a rumor to the effect that the lawyers had been called in to deal with the Líkhachov estate, and that the banker would nevermore occupy the house in the Liténia.

CHAPTER XX

AN IMPORTANT ORDER "CONFIRMED"

AT last the Transbaikál, and Platónov's first awakening in it! With his bones aching from contact with the hard floor, the convict raised himself to a sitting position. The earliest rays of daylight had begun to creep in through the high, narrow windows of his log prison; he could hear the pacing to and fro of the sentry in the adjoining corridor. Rubbing his eyes, the prisoner tried to think. It seemed as if he had just been aroused from a frightful dream. Well he knew, as he shuddered at the memory, that it was the same dream as that which thousands and thousands had dreamed before him. It was the dream of the father, wrested from the loved ones at home, and from every scene and solace that make life dear; the dream of the mother with babe at breast, following her husband into a captivity worse than death; the dream of the child, caught up from the joys of youth to be untimely broken on the wheel of the world's wrong. It was the dream of the Siberian road, resounding with the clink-clank of leg-fetters, the dull creaking of wagons, the moaning of the sick, the

shouting of Cossack soldiers; of the *taiga*,¹ with its inviting foliage, now drawing anear, as if to tantalize the march with the prospect of liberty, now retreating afar off, as though to plunge it in despair; of the mocking midday siesta, recalling the old life in the fields, the sweet amenities of home; and of the last torture of each recurring day, the ever-broken slumber in the overcrowded, malodorous étape station. Yes, it was the dream of the exile party, that line of helpless gray, fringed with bayonets, sunlit at times, but also cloud-darkened, or drenched with rain, now blown upon by soft breezes, now harassed by storm and snow, but ever — through all nature's caressings and buffetings — moving ever onward towards the Transbaikál!

Yet as the light waxed, and the bustle of the prison grew around him, these hideous recollections faded from Platónov's mind, and he sprang to his feet. He was at last face to face with the cares of his new position. On the occasion of his first visit to Siberia, he had been deported simply as an exile; and being permitted to occupy a log cabin in the open air, had enjoyed a certain measure of freedom. Committed now as a convict to the mines with a reputation of "dangerous," he found himself in close confinement, as well as subject to rigorous discipline. As an additional

¹ Siberian forest.

precaution, the prison authorities had given him a single cell, thus isolating him from the other convicts. Yet it was not that he was to be alone, not that he was to be treated with especial severity, that made him anxious. Hard as it was, his present lot had even its mitigations. He would still have the sounds of prison life surging all day about him; he would receive a formal morning visit from the prison commandant; three times a day a soldier would bring him food; on stated week days he would be privileged to exercise in the prison yard with the other convicts, — thus coming, if under supervision, and for a few brief minutes, into that sort of humanizing contact with mankind from the lack of which prisoners everywhere suffer so terribly. It was what his future was to be that most seriously concerned him. Solitary confinement he well knew was but a prelude to the final disposition of his case. After a few weeks — or months, it might be — spent in prison, he would, under the most favorable circumstances, be sent to a placer mine, and put to hard labor with common convicts under a guard of Cossack soldiery. There was also a chance, should things come to their worst, of his being deported to that Russian inferno, the island of Sakhalín! To contemplate either fate, even in its physical aspect, was sufficiently appalling to a man whose frame had never yet been tried by so rude a test: it carried

with it, moreover, a sense of moral degradation that made the prospect intolerable. Hence the idea of escape, never absent from the thought of the exile in Siberia, arose in Platónov's mind with something like definiteness and purpose. For the moment, indeed, desire so overleaped judgment that even the impossible seemed within easy reach. Yet when the prisoner considered alike the achievement and its cost, his heart fell. Intervening between him and civilization — like a wall not to be pierced or climbed, like an ocean not to be traversed or navigated — lay an immense expanse of territory, the conquering of which could only be the beginning of new difficulties. For what of the punishments which Freedom herself stood prepared to mete out to those who won her in these desert wilds, the struggle with a tangled forest that would tear him with no more mercy than a wild beast; the flight from gaunt hunger and loathsome disease, spectres to be forever on his track, — the not less relentless pursuit by human shapes equally terrible, perhaps an early death by the bullet of the dreaded vagabond hunter?

Once at the mine, the chance of liberty for the convict would be small, indeed; if removed to Sakhalín, Platónov felt that he would have seen the last of civilization. It was while he reflected that the sounds of voices made their way into his cell from the adjoining *kamera*. At once came the

thought that it must have occupants, and that something might be learned by setting up communication with them. He began to knock, using his knuckles against the hard, closely set logs. First one part of the wall, then another, the prisoner tried, pausing as the sentry approached the door, beginning again as the retreating steps grew fainter. In this way a quarter of an hour elapsed without response; as the knocking had remained resultless, Platónov made up his mind that his neighbors were common convicts who had never used this means of communication, and that, until his removal to the mine, he must be content to remain without companions.

Not many days after the propagandist's arrival, while the convicts were exercising in the prison yard, a strolling peddler made his appearance, and having obtained the necessary permission, was soon selling his wares to such of the prisoners as had money. Platónov, who needed none of the trinkets, looked on as the chaffering proceeded. It was a lively scene, for the trader, besides being shrewd, had much of the loquacity and humor of his class. For a moment, it seemed to the exile as if he had seen those features before,— the face, of a Little-Russian type, with its dark-reddish tint, its short black beard and eyebrows of jet. The impression passed as the man's hands came into view, for they were covered with such cheap brass

rings as country peddlers in Russia love to bedeck their fingers. Yet, suddenly, as the fellow came nearer, Platónov saw him twirl to and fro, with a rapid, jerky motion, a small iron ring on the little finger of his right hand, — at once a signal and an assurance! Instantly Platónov's eyes sank. He feared lest the sudden light that had been lit in them might betray him!

Well knowing now that friends were at work on his behalf, Platónov brooded for days after the peddler's visit over the thought of escape. He had by this time thoroughly mastered the structural details of his place of confinement; in the mental map he had constructed for himself, every passage and doorway had its proper place. He had seen what exits were guarded, had noted the comings and goings of the sentries, as well as the times at which they were changed. He knew also just what amount of cunning and strength was needed to elude the vigilance and overcome the physical barriers that shut him in. Yet not in that prison — as if fate had decreed it — were his resources to be put to the test.

Suddenly and unexpectedly the planet of his destiny took a new course. One afternoon, as the Siberian summer was drawing to its close, a prison coach, whose rude construction had been superficially redeemed with a coating of fresh paint, drew up at the door of the gaol. It was

drawn by three horses, and had for its driver a man in the ordinary attire of a prison warder. Inside were three uniformed officers, one of them wearing the insignia and decorations of superior rank. It was this official, the leader of the party, who, after dismounting, had addressed an inquiry to the sentinel on duty, and had by that official been conducted to the room of the prison commandant. Meanwhile the Cossacks stationed in the quadrangle formed by the prison offices had come together in a group, and were already exchanging surmises as to the nature of the business which had brought one of the Governor-General's messengers on a visit to the prison settlement of N——. By this time the newcomer had been offered a chair in the snug little office of the prison chief, and comfortably seated there, was carefully scanning some papers which he had withdrawn from his pocket in preparation for the interview.

A few minutes later the door opened, and the commandant, a short, robust, stoutly built man fifty years old or thereabouts, entered the room. Greetings were, with a mutual "*Zdrástvyté!*" exchanged between the two as the visitor, springing to his feet, took a step towards the chief and held out his hand. The commandant found himself faced by a man some dozen years younger than himself, with hard features, aquiline nose, and penetrating glance.

"To what," asked the chief, "am I indebted for the honor of this call?"

"I am here," said the other, "to transfer the convict Platónov from this prison to the Governor-General's headquarters."

"Platónov," musingly repeated the commandant. "Ah, yes, — the political. Why, I thought we were to have him for good until he was sent to the mines. You are, by the way" —

"The Governor-General's official messenger," was the curt reply.

"And you have all the papers in order?"

"I have."

The visitor produced a warrant issued by the Governor-General of Eastern Siberia, requiring the commandant of the prison at N—— to hand over to the custody of the messenger, Anton Dmitriévich Obolin, the convict Platónov, for conveyance to S——. Accompanying the warrant was a communication in which the Governor-General briefly explained that a plot with extensive ramifications had been discovered, and that he wished to have Platónov, who was implicated, in order to confront him with other conspirators, and with witnesses.

The commandant carefully perused the documents, and then, touching a handbell, called his secretary. The papers were given over to this official for purposes of verification.

"When do you wish to return with your man?" the messenger was asked, as the two strolled from the office in the direction of the prison coach.

"At once," was the reply.

"Do you know anything of the plot?" was asked again."

"Not personally," said the messenger; "but I was told before leaving S—— that part of the scheme—the chief feature of it, in fact—was the assassination of the Governor-General himself."

"Zounds! What creatures these revolutionists be!" muttered the commandant. "And this Platónov, you say, was the chief conspirator?"

"That I cannot say. I know only that he is seriously implicated."

Here the men came in sight of the coach. The three prison officers had left it, and were chatting idly with the Cossacks.

"Where on earth did you get the carriage?" suddenly asked the commandant.

"Have n't the slightest notion," was the nonchalant reply.

"Why," continued the chief, touching the framework of the vehicle with his finger, "the paint's scarcely dry on it."

"I suppose the coach was got out in a hurry," ventured the messenger. "The Governor-General thought there was no time to lose."

The commandant said nothing, but instinctively scanned the uniforms of the prison officers. He was then called away by his secretary.

The messenger did not again see the chief until late in the afternoon. The commandant informed him that the papers had been found in order, but that Platónov could not be removed till the following morning.

"How is that?" was the surprised inquiry.

"It is now our custom to have all important orders confirmed by the Governor-General himself."

The countenance of the messenger fell. His keen eyes seemed to flash with displeasure, but he quickly suppressed himself, and merely asked that the communication with his chief should be effected as speedily as possible.

"I regret the delay," apologetically added the commandant, "but the orders leave us no alternative."

For the rest of the evening the prison chief seemed to avoid the members of the visiting party as much as possible, and to be especially sparing of words. For the night the newcomers were snugly housed in various parts of the quadrangle.

Soon after eight on the following morning a Cossack came to say to the messenger that the commandant would like to have Anton Dmitriévich Obolin at breakfast with him. Ten minutes

later the two men were partaking of the first meal of the day in the mining settlement of N——. The slight reserve of the previous evening was now all gone; the commandant chatted freely as well as familiarly with his visitor. The topics discussed were commonplace, and it was not till cigars were lit that the chief returned to business.

“We heard from the Governor-General late last night,” he began, “but did not think it worth while to rouse you.”

“The warrant is confirmed, then?”

For reply the commandant handed him a telegram on which he found the lines:—

“The Governor-General of Eastern Siberia hereby confirms his written order for the delivery of the convict Platónov to special officer Anton Dmitriévich Obolin, and requests that his instructions be carried out forthwith. Let the utmost precaution be taken in the convict’s removal.”

“Promptitude and caution is the word,” commented the commandant as he received the telegram from his guest.

“From one who knows his business, if anybody does,” was the reply.

“Then everything is ready?”

“Everything.”

Together the men moved into the quadrangle. It took them no more than a few seconds to reach

the log prison, at the door of which stood the coach waiting for Platónov.

The convict had been informed of his new destination on the previous evening, and had since then racked his brain almost continuously in the effort to devise some plan which would enable him to turn to his own advantage the bustle and excitement incident to his removal. Yet along with the information that he was to leave N—— had come an increased measure of vigilance on the part of the authorities. Not only had a double guard been placed in the corridor upon which his cell opened, early in the morning the prison officers had placed him in irons and bade him prepare for conveyance to S——. A few hours later, with a dazed expression on his face, he was brought from his cell and thrust, between the drawn sabres of a double file of Cossacks, into the vehicle in waiting. Three of the visiting officers followed him in; the fourth ascended to the driver's box; then the door of the coach closed with a bang. After hasty adieux had been taken with the prison commandant, the horses were set in motion. At first they were driven at a leisurely pace, but after they had proceeded some distance along the winding road that led westward from the settlement, the driver gave them the rein and lashed them to the top of their speed.

The commandant, having thus presided over the transfer of the convict, retired to his room and

proceeded to comply with the routine obligatory in all such cases. One feature of this was the preparation of a special report of the affair, which he dispatched to the Governor-General by mounted courier. The other was the writing out of a telegram informing that official of his action in the matter. To the message by wire there was, for some reason or other, no response ; and when, several days later, the Governor-General's answer came to the written report, it was of a nature to provide the settlement with gossip for many months.

CHAPTER XXI

THE PAN ZBOROVSKI LENDS A HAND

NOT more than a few days after the scenes described in the last chapter, the Pan Zborovski, a well-known trader and storekeeper in N——, might have been seen in his cart approaching the settlement of that name after one of his periodical trips to the adjacent “government” town for goods. The old man was a familiar figure in N——, for it was there that he had spent the greater part of his life. Exiled as a youth for complicity in a political movement, he had served out his sentence at the mines, had then spent a number of years as a “free colonist,” and had finally gone into business for himself within the settlement. The Pan had seen numerous changes in the administration of the mines, was on friendly terms with the government officers, and by the excellence of his conduct for almost half a century had completely won the confidence of the prison authorities. His store — at which almost everything purchasable from a pound of tea to a yard of silk ribbon was at the disposal of the customer — had grown to be one of the largest in eastern Siberia. As to the

Pan himself, though now seventy-three years of age, he was still robust in appearance ; not yet was there any perceptible stoop in his tall, commanding figure ; there even remained in his aspect a certain dignity and stateliness such as, had he been fittingly attired, would have more than suggested the appearance he presented when, as a young Polish nobleman, the Russian soldiers hurried him into exile.

As the Pan, on this particular afternoon, drove up the road to the settlement, with the gloomy log prison to the left, the houses of N—— nestling in a cavity of the hills to his right, he came to a part of the road which, on account of its elevation, gave an exceptionally good view over the surrounding country. Here he might have been seen to shade his eyes with his right hand, and to gaze long and earnestly at some object which had there for the first time come into view. That he could make out its shape, or merely recognized it as a break in the even contour line of the horizon, nobody who watched him would have been able to say. Yet it was no phantasm that had thus attracted his attention. The place was familiar enough to him. Again and again he must have turned and gazed, as on former occasions he reached this spot on his way back to the settlement. It had now come once more within range, — that lonely cross amid the silent hills, the rude sign of sepulture

which in Siberia the prison authorities are in the habit of erecting over the graves of their convicts who die in exile. For a while the distant object, symbol alike of bitter experiences and consecrated memories, swam before the eyes of the old Pan. Then gradually the sigh which from moment to moment escaped him took the form of words, and with a muttered benediction for the dead, the old man turned away.

Lower down the road a more prosaic object soon came into sight. It was the *traktir*, or tavern, on the outskirts of N——, the great meeting-place for peddlers, drivers, gossips, *et hoc genus omne*. The Pan remembered that he had a package to leave there.

Stopping his horses at the door, he descended to make the delivery. The landlord held him for a moment over a glass of vodka. As he stood, the Pan could hear a group of hilarious peasants exchanging the latest news concerning an escaped convict.

“They’ve caught him by this time, I’ll warrant,” said one of the men.

“Don’t be too sure,” returned another. “Once he’s got into the *taiga*, who can follow him? Not the devil himself.”

“Well; he’s making for Europe, wherever he is. Ten to one if he ever reaches the boundary alive! Nobody ever does it!”

“Pooh, pooh!” came the answer. “Some of our graybeards have gone back home, and started life again, without any one being the wiser for it. What could n’t a young fellow do?”

“Easier to break out of the Tsar’s strongest stone prison than to tear your way through the forest. Yea, as God’s my witness,” reiterated the speaker.

“Ay,” said a third; “and if the trees and rocks, the rivers and rains, spare him, he’ll be shot as a vagabond. There be whole villages that live on that business. Right glad would the Governor-General be to give a hundred roubles for his head.”

The Pan hurried away, refusing the second glass which the landlord would have pressed upon him. As the old man left the *traktir*, he found himself accosted by a prison officer with whom he had long been more or less intimate, — the copyist of the settlement, one who, besides performing official duties at the prison, occasionally acted as public notary.

“As I live, the Pan Zborovski!” Then noticing the heavily laden team, the official added, “And you have n’t made your fortune yet, Stefan Petróvich?”

“Not yet; — but what can I do for you?” was the Pan’s cheery response.

“This time I shall ask you for a lift. That is, if you have room enough.”

“Always room for you, Gregóry Alexéievich. Won’t you jump in?”

The official accepted the invitation, and climbing over the front wheel, took his seat near the driver on the edge of a large provision box upon the remainder of which other boxes and cases had been piled.

Having reached this coign of vantage, the official at once began to improve on the gossip which he, as well as the Pan, had heard in the *traktir*. Well aware that this was all the Pole could know of the escape, he took delight in watching the changes of expression that, as one by one the details were communicated, made the old man’s face a study.

“And how did he get away?” was the Pan’s first question.

“Get away? Why, they fetched him in a coach. Four conspirators in prison uniform and a forged order to hand Platónov over for removal to headquarters.”

“Holy Maria!” exclaimed the Pan; “what’s to become of us! So the prison people actually let him go, did they?”

“Let him go, indeed! And with a warrant signed by the Governor-General himself, what else would they be doing? It was a poor carriage, I’ll admit, — an old ramshackle affair daubed over with a coat of fresh paint. Yet once they

had the door shut and the horses on the gallop, — why, they had their man as safe as if he'd been inside the strongest prison van that ever was made."

"Did the commandant see it?" here asked the Pan.

"He did. Much he wondered that the Governor-General should have sent such a break-down affair on such an errand. But nobody blames him for doing what he did. The warrant was enough. Then with the telegram in his hand, — why, if they'd brought one of the good Pan Zborovski's provision boxes to carry him off in" (and here the speaker applied his cane smartly to the side of the box on which he was sitting), "the chief would have been justified in handing him over."

"But what of the telegram?" asked the Pan.

"The telegram was the forged answer the chief got from the Governor-General confirming the order."

"And how was that done?"

"Well, it was several days before they found out, and then only through the wires becoming useless. The chief sent a Cossack along the telegraph route. This fellow soon discovered the place where the line had been cut. The conspirators, you know, were in too much of a hurry to piece it again."

"And it was they who sent the forged telegram?"

“It was.”

“Jesu Maria!”

And with this exclamation on his lips, the Pan Zborovski drew up in front of his store, parted with his official acquaintance, and at once set about the work of unloading his team. The task would have been a difficult one under any circumstances, since the Pan never returned with less than a month's stores in his cart. On this occasion he had an unusually heavy load, and was particularly anxious to have everything safely stowed away before nightfall. Yet this desire of his seemed to operate against the execution thereof, for customers entering the store an hour later were informed by the old man's son that the Pan had over-exerted himself and had been compelled to retire. Nor did the morning find him sufficiently recovered to resume his daily occupations; while for days afterward, when questioned on the subject, his daughter-in-law, with a look of dejection in her face, would repeat the story of the mishap to the Pan, adding, “I'm afraid we shan't have the old man long.”

Whatever truth there might be in the prophecy, it soon became evident that Zborovski was permanently disabled, and would probably never again take an active part in the management of his store. So serious, in fact, was his condition that he remained confined to the upper part of the house, and could be visited there only by his son, to whom

he was known to have finally surrendered the conduct of his business affairs in N——. In his illness the Pan occupied a large room in a hitherto disused wing of the house, now fitted up for use as a bedroom. Into this a door opened from a corridor communicating with the rest of the upper story; through each of the two side walls of the apartment a window admitted light; against the third wall stood the old man's bed. It was here, when coming in with meals, or for business conferences, that the faithful son found his father, most of the time in a half slumber, but on other occasions supported on pillows in a half-reclining attitude and reading, for, despite his failing eyesight, the old Pan loved books. Occasionally, moreover,—had there been anybody to listen, which there was not,—he might have been heard repeating to himself page after page of the narrative which had absorbed him; while, if there had been any possibility of gossip about the old man, which of course there was not, it might have been said that he had contracted the habit of talking to himself.

For months did the Pan Zborovski remain thus in his solitary room, and for months did he look anxiously forward towards the time when his vigil, for such it was, would be at an end. Utterly without companionship, such a situation would have been intolerable. Yet the Pan drew strength

as well as consolation from the frequent visits of his son. Nor were other sources of comfort lacking; and it was perhaps upon these that he most depended as through the long winter nights he lay recalling incidents from his own life, as well as from the history of Poland, with a certain episode of which that life had been so inextricably blended.

Let us look in upon him on one of these evenings when, under the spell of the past, he is again summoning into consciousness, and even into uttered speech, some of the events which have deeply graven their impress upon his memory. The shutters are closed in; the lamp burns low; the fire in the little stove casts its ruddy glow upon the ceiling. The good Pan is quite alone. And yet —

“How well I remember the old place,” he is saying in an undertone. “The very gorges and ravines rise up before me as I think of it; the gloomy log prison; the scattered settlement, as it was then; the straggling huts of the colonists; the mine itself, with its dark recesses, and — Ugh! who would ever have supposed, after my father had exerted himself to give me an education, that I was doomed to spend so much of my life in such a hell as N——? Yet our lot was by no means the worst, was it?”

“It was not,” said a Voice, sounding from behind the wall close to which the Pan lay.

“Of course you remember Ilyin.”

"I remember him well," replied the Voice, "though I knew nothing of his early life. He often promised to tell me, but somehow or other the opportunity never came."

"A sad, romantic story, indeed," continued the Pan. "Ilyin, of course, was not his real name."

"That much I knew."

"I first became acquainted with him," resumed the Pan, "in Warsaw at the beginning of the forties. He was then in the very heyday of life, — splendid physique, dark complexion, flashing eyes, — as handsome a young cavalry officer as one would see anywhere in Russia, or in Poland, for that matter. But they ruined him, as they ruined thousands of others."

"What was it, politics?" asked the Voice.

"No politics, I assure you. He simply happened to fall in love with a beautiful Polish woman; and jealousy, race hatred, and the abuse of power did the rest."

"Did you know her?" asked the Voice.

"More than that, — I worshiped her, as did scores of others. She preferred the young officer, and that proved her ruin, as well as his."

"How did they meet?"

"We all met, for all had been invited. It was at the official ball which the Governor-General gives once a year in Warsaw."

"Poles included?" asked the Voice.

“For us, of course, it was a case of compulsion rather than of choice,” replied the Pan; “and as we had the privilege of coming at our own sweet will or at the point of a Moskal¹ bayonet, there were few absentees, you may depend on it. All the same,” he went on, “it was an experience worth having.”

“She was really beautiful, then?” asked the Voice.

“The *panna* was fair beyond all women I ever met, — so bewitchingly pretty that to look at her was to think of a blush rose on some balmy summer morning. Not one of your tall beauties, for she was only of medium height; yet she had a finely proportioned figure that made most of the men who once saw her miserable for a whole lifetime. As for her features, — it would take a poet to describe them. Even when everything one has ever read about cheeks with pretty dimples in them, of sable brows daintily arched, and of lips that recall the marble of classic sculpture, — even when all that had been brought together, the description would not do her justice. Why, that glorious head of ashen-hued curls which she carried with such dignity would alone have been enough to make her irresistible. The Panna Hedwiga had all these attractions, and yet she possessed something in addition which placed her far beyond and

¹ Muscovite, Russian.

above them, — she had the grace, the charm, and withal the dignity of a beautiful soul.”

“A fascinating woman,” said the Voice.

“Ay, fascinating indeed,” continued the Pan ; “and I can see her again, almost as in a dream. In truth, she was that night herself a dream, in her filmy dress of pure white, her arms bare, a cluster of roses nestling at her neck, and on her luxuriant head a wreath of white lilies. And when the young Russian took her out to dance, we all gathered there to watch his partner as her lithe, airy figure glided in its undulating movements along the parqueted floor, scarcely seeming to touch it, her head held proudly erect, her pearly teeth shining through lips just parted by a smile, while the beautiful eyes fairly sparkled with excitement and happiness.”

“No wonder,” the Pan went on, heaving the while a deep sigh, “that we all fell in love with her. I knew of the others by my own feelings, and not a man of them could conceal it from the rest ! In truth, they did n’t need to, for it was pure, that passion of ours, — the sense of something infinitely bright and beautiful, — the worship of a woman human like other women we had met, and yet in some way higher than we and they as the angels are, and as much beyond our reach as the very stars in heaven. Only one thing I could compare her to, and that is our beloved Poland ! ”

The Voice remained silent.

"Yes," resumed the Pan, "we knew she could not be ours, but we did not know that in a few months she would be in her grave."

Here a sob choked the old man's utterance. Recovering himself, he went on: "Of course, with the young officer, it was a case of love at first sight. As for the *panna*, why, she just doted on her admirer. Everybody could see how excellently matched the young couple were. Yet he had a formidable, ay, a deadly rival, poor fellow, though he did not know it."

"And his rival?"

"Was the Governor-General of Poland, one Galkin, of whom you have doubtless heard. Well do I remember him asking the girl to join him in a *mazourka*! There was even then a look on his face that boded the young *panna* no good; while if you could have seen the expression that came into hers as she turned to him, you would have straightway thought of a bird when the gaze of a snake is fastened upon it."

"Then the young people were not married?" asked the Voice.

"They were," was the reply: "for although the father of the *panna*, the Pan Konaplonski, made objections to the union, the girl, after many weeks, finally won him over, and he gave his consent. Now the old man had previously refused his daugh-

ter to the Governor-General on account of her excessive youth; and when the rejected suitor heard of her marriage, he vowed vengeance. Of course, there was no sentiment in his case. In gambling and dissipation he had wasted, not only his own fortune, but also the patrimony of his first wife. He had looked to the union with Hedwiga to rehabilitate his shattered fortunes, and to have his prospects dashed by a successful rival was more than he could bear. The opportunity soon came. Ten months later, news was brought to Galkin of the arrest of one Pyasedski, relative of the Pan Konaplonski, on suspicion of being a revolutionist. The Governor remembered seeing Pyasedski at the ball where he had met the Panna Hedwiga. The same evening Galkin dispatched a messenger to St. Petersburg with papers for the authorities there. In these he denounced the old man and his son to the political police. Declaring that the former was at the head of a conspiracy against Russian rule in Poland, he alleged that the latter had undertaken to bring about a revolt in the army. The fate of the unfortunate family was now sealed. Scarcely a year had elapsed since the *panna's* marriage, and when the bolt fell, the young couple were at their country home awaiting the wife's confinement. Determined that the chains of the Moskal should never bind him, the old Pan cut his throat with a razor as the gendarmes

were leading him from his residence. The young husband was exiled to the mines at N——, where he came to be known as Ilyin through having exchanged names with a common convict while on the way to Siberia. The wife died a few days after giving birth to her child; but Ilyin, as they called him, did not at the time know of her death, though he heard of it several years later from Polish revolutionists exiled from Warsaw. The news did him no good, for all his efforts to set up communication with, or learn something definite about, his family proved unavailing.”

Such was old Pan Zborovski’s fairy tale, and such the tragedy that rounded it out with so sombre a sequel!

“Poor Ilyin!” commented the Voice. “To think that we both saw him die, and were both present at his burial!”

“Sad enough!” rejoined the Pan. “Yet he was only one of thousands. And every time I look upon that cross, and remember the Panna Hedwiga, I think of my beautiful Poland and how she was crucified!”

CHAPTER XXII

RESTITUTION

AND now what of Tanya? Many months have elapsed since last we saw her: in the interim also many events have happened. The girl had by this time completely recovered from the effects of the disease brought upon her by her own heroism and self-sacrifice; not less important, her period of exile was over, and — by a combination of circumstances with which the reader is about to be made acquainted — she was traveling in Siberia. Tanya was as yet all unaware of the tragedy which had so irretrievably broken up the banker's household; but she had received through a lawyer the considerable sum of money which, at the request of the dying Sonya, had been placed in her hands as a memorial gift from her dead friend. It was with a portion of this sum that she was defraying the cost of her journey to the northeast, undertaken in the hope that, somewhere, somehow, she might be able to procure an interview with Platónov, or, at least, to learn something of his whereabouts. Happily, she was not journeying alone, for the schoolmaster was with

her. Indeed, they were traveling with a single passport, as brother and sister, and had been enabled to do this for the reason that, in the interval between Tanya's recovery and her setting out for Siberia, Forsyth, during a hurried visit to London, had there succeeded in obtaining engagements as correspondent for several metropolitan and provincial newspapers.

Tanya had meanwhile undergone a metamorphosis. She was now fully budded into womanhood. Yet the charm of youth not only remained; it seemed heightened by the transformation. For there was something in her tall, slender figure, clad in a tightly fitting traveling dress, and wearing on her shapely head a fur cap, that suggested the appearance of a boy still in the bloom and beauty of early adolescence. As she sat near him, with her short hair falling about her neck; with her eyes drooped, full of a delicious languor, their expression at once sad and sweet; and with the color surging back and forth in faint waves over her cheeks, still pale with the fatigues of the road, Forsyth thought he had never before seen her so beautiful. Yet it was not for him to view her with the eyes of a lover. The only part left to him now was that of brotherhood, and faithfully — nay, zealously — did he play it. To see him caring for her wraps and shawls, taking charge of her handbags, arranging for everything she needed, was to witness a marvel of activity.

The travelers, without having any special destination in view, were proceeding to N—— in the expectation of hearing something there concerning Platónov. As the escape had taken place about the time of their departure for Siberia, they could not by any chance have had news of it; though there had been ample time since then to make it a commonplace all over the territories of the northeast. So effectively had the news been spread, so completely had it gone to every city, village, station-house, and post-road, that only madmen would have attempted to carry a fugitive thus wanted over a continent thus warned and on the *qui vive*. Nor had the rescuers ever contemplated any such impossible enterprise. Knowing that they would be equally unable to return their man to European Russia, or to smuggle him across the frontier into China, they had planned to conceal him temporarily in the settlement of N—— itself, hard by the place where he was handed over by the prison commandant. In this scheme they had been greatly aided by the coöperation of the Pan Zborovski, not only because of the confidence the old man enjoyed in the official world of the settlement, but also because of his friendship for Platónov, and of the profound respect, amounting almost to reverence, with which he had always regarded the propagandist. Hence it was that while the authorities were scouring almost every

mile of Siberian territory in search of the escaped convict, the much-wanted man lay safely hidden behind the false wall of the Pan Zborovski's bedroom,—a wall so thin that a whisper could be made to penetrate it, and so carefully disguised in its construction as to give absolutely no sign of the door through which the propagandist received his meals.

Without doubt the confinement and semi-darkness of the place were trying to Platónov ; yet it was far pleasanter for him to be there than jolting over country roads inside a provision box in the team of his friend, the good Pan. Moreover, the time of his release was now at hand ; for with the return of fine weather the search had practically been given up, the authorities having themselves adopted the generally accepted belief that early in the chase the fugitive had succeeded in making good his escape into China. All that remained was for Platónov to complete his preparations for leaving N——. The conspirators had planned that he should cross the frontier in the bold disguise of a coachman, and that the merchant whom he was to drive should be no other than the agent of the Armenian, Ter-Simoniantz.

A few days before the date fixed for the departure of the propagandist, Tanya and Forsyth, weary and dusty with the day's journey, drove up to the last station-house on the road to N——.

The first thing which attracted the girl's attention as she entered was the placard, now much worn and tattered, containing, along with the description of Platónov, the offer of a reward for his recapture. Suddenly realizing the peril of her lover, Tanya began to show signs of alarm; whereupon Forsyth, speaking in English, and in a low tone of voice, did his utmost to reassure her. It was while he was thus engaged that the sound of wheels made itself heard. A moment later the door of the station-house opened, giving entrance to a man of middle stature habited as a wealthy merchant. The newcomer, having had the samovar brought to him, produced from his coat pocket a small bag of sugar, and proceeded to drink tea in the manner peculiar to his class, — that is, by imbibing it through a cube of sugar held between the teeth. In the act of sipping the fragrant beverage, the stranger noticed Tanya. Suddenly a look of deep interest, in which surprise was also mingled, passed over his face. Again and again he gazed, as if to assure himself that he was not mistaken, or, it might be, to obtain some token that the recognition was mutual. But the girl did not respond. The glances of the unknown alarmed her. Under other conditions, they would have found her indifferent: now, in the peril of her relation to Platónov, she could only regard them as hostile. Yet, as half-abstractedly she

allowed her own gaze to rest on the countenance of the merchant, there formed in her mind the belief that somewhere she had seen him before, though when and where it was impossible, in the agitation of the moment, for her to recall. A brief conference between the friends ended in their resolve to leave at the earliest moment. Quietly they made arrangements for departure. The horses were harnessed, and Tanya took her place. Forsyth hurried back to bring her wraps. He had hardly disappeared when a hand was laid on the girl's shoulder, and a low voice began: "Tatiána Vladímírovna" — With the blood rushing to her heart, she turned and faced the stranger. "Tatiána Vladímírovna," he repeated; "fear not; I am a friend, — your friend, and the friend of Platónov."

This fortunate *rencontre* with the agent of Ter-Simoniantz — for it was he whom they had met — led to a brief conference in which the travelers obtained all the information they needed concerning the propagandist. It was in compliance with the directions then received that a few days later Tanya and Forsyth found themselves journeying, this time on foot, in the region beyond the outskirts of the settlement. It was a lonely spot, sheltered by hills, — a tract whose native wildness the Siberian spring had already begun to deck with early flowers. Conversing little, they pursued

their way cautiously, scanning the horizon with care as they advanced. After they had proceeded in this manner for half an hour or more, Forsyth suddenly stopped, and pointed his companion to the little hillock which a slight rise in the ground had brought to view. Gazing in the direction indicated, the girl caught sight of the outlines of a rudely shaped wooden cross clearly contrasted with the surrounding vegetation. With their destination thus fairly before them, the friends resumed their journey.

Tanya and Forsyth were proceeding to a rendezvous with Platónov on the morning of his departure, and the old wooden cross had been chosen as the place of meeting, for the reason that the propagandist would have to pass it in his flight towards the frontier. Both were in excellent spirits, and each looked forward with eagerness to an event which promised to be the beginning of the end of their sojourn in Siberia. True, a trepidation still lingered in Tanya's mind, — the fear for her lover, the thought of the many perils that might still impend. Yet this did not prevent a rosy flush from suffusing her cheek as she realized that in a few moments more she would be in his presence.

An instant later, quick alarms were chasing each other through the girl's delicate frame. For, on nearing the cross, and while still at the distance of thirty or forty paces, the wayfarers caught sight of

a human form in a recumbent position close to the landmark. Slowly, as they gazed, it rose from its knees, and they saw the figure of an aged man. The friends stopped immediately, and began to wonder who the stranger could be. For a moment Tanya gave free course to her apprehensions ; she even began to fear lest the authorities had in some way obtained knowledge of the projected escape. Yet the thought passed away as quickly as it had been formed in her mind, for while she looked, the face of the unknown, turned for a while in another direction, came now into full view, and the travelers at once recognized the familiar lineaments of the banker Líkhachov. It was like the sight of an apparition, so much did it startle and astonish them ; for a moment or two neither could utter a sound or move a step. While they were thus hesitating, the banker noticed them, — he, too, with a look of mingled recognition, wonder, and incredulity on his face that only helped to increase their embarrassment. But in an instant his surprise was gone, and an expression came into the visage of the old man more grave and solemn than they had ever seen it wear before. He advanced a little in front of the cross as if to meet them, and then, with slightly bowed head, and with his right hand raised, moved his lips as if to utter the first words that should be spoken in that strange gathering-place.

Before he could begin, the sound made by an approaching vehicle broke upon the stillness. Nearer and nearer it came, until finally a *kibítka*, drawn by a span of three horses, drew up close to the hillock.

Tanya had grown pale and rosy by turns, but she had not dared to look round: knowing whom to expect, the girl stood irresolute, as if rooted to the spot. It was only when a firm foot pressed the turf near her, and a well-known voice uttered her name, that, with an answering cry, she turned quickly to Platónov, and was clasped in his arms.

The exile — disguised as to be almost unrecognizable — looked thinner and paler than she had seen him before, but he stood erect: there was a light in his eyes, an imperious expression in his face, that augured well for the success of his enterprise. Though in good spirits, his manner was serious, his words few, — no one knew better than he the dangers that lay before him. Time, too, was precious, and he had none of it to lose. After a greeting to Forsyth, whose hands he shook heartily, the exile would have turned again to Tanya for a last conference. Suddenly noticing the old man, he cast an inquiring look at Forsyth, and also glanced questioningly into the face of the girl. Tanya had just whispered her explanation, when Líkhachov, who had patiently waited through

the interview for an opportunity to speak, again moved forward.

“The Lord be thanked, Tatiána Vladímírovna,” he began, with uplifted eyes and solemn mien, “that he has sent you here in answer to my prayers. Deeply have I been punished, and greatly have I repented of my sin. Yet now the supreme mercy has been granted to me that I may make some amends for it, if not expiate it altogether.”

At first Tanya watched him with a face full of bewilderment. Even Forsyth felt the thought forming in his mind that the good banker had suddenly gone crazy.

“Perhaps you do not yet understand,” continued the old man, with a more distressful countenance than ever, “and how should you believe it, — you who have never heard a whisper against my name, — you who have never cherished a thought of wrong against another? Know, then, Tatiána Vladímírovna, that I am deeply guilty towards you, — that I have grievously wronged both you and yours.”

Here Tanya, remembering the affection which the banker had always lavished upon Sonya, began to connect the strange words she had heard with the exceeding severity of the old man’s recent bereavement.

“My name, did I say?” continued the banker. A quick shudder ran through his frame as he

spoke. "True, 't was the name I bore to you and the world. But it was stolen, Tatiána Vladímirovna, — stolen! — and I who stand before you was the thief! Alas, the shame, the ignominy of it! For while all these years he was spending his manhood in banishment, I was living on his possessions. I defrauded him of them, — I defrauded you. Yea, villain that I am, it was I who crucified him even as our Saviour was crucified." The sweat had come out in great drops upon the banker's forehead, and his body shook as with a convulsion.

Tanya involuntarily recalled the mystery of her early life, and without knowing why, felt herself growing interested in the banker's self-accusations.

"Líkhachov!" continued the old man. "Call me 'Líkhachov' no longer. If you would know my real name, — if you would learn the enormity of my guilt, the burden of his suffering, — you have only to look on the cross!"

The friends directed their gaze to the cross, and at once noticed what had previously escaped their attentive observation, — some rude letters which, deeply graven into the weather-beaten landmark, many winters had not been able to obliterate. The letters formed a name until now unknown to them, — the name "Ilyin." In a flash, the words of the false Líkhachov were upon them with the force of a revelation.

“Yes, Tatiána Vladímirovna,” continued the banker, “it is the body of your grandfather who lies there at your feet.”

For a moment Platónov surveyed the cross, with a glance which also took in the adjacent scenery. He would have spoken, had not Tanya anticipated him.

“How, then,” she asked, “did you come to bear his name?”

“We came to Siberia together,” answered the old man, “he exiled for a political offense, I sent into hard labor for a common crime. It was on the road to the mines that we met. Wishing to go to the same region as his friend, one Pyasédski, also banished, your grandfather paid me to exchange names with him, after a custom common among Siberian convicts. He went to my destination under the name of Ilyin, I to his under the name of Líkhachov. Thus it happened that when, after a few years, a pardon came for your grandfather, I took it and returned to St. Petersburg a free man, while the real Líkhachov lingered in captivity till the day of his death.”

“Then you made no effort to acquaint him with what had happened?” queried the schoolmaster.

“A word would have set him free,” continued the old man, “yet not a syllable escaped my lips. Well enough I knew that only a few days after the banishment, his wife died broken-hearted; yet

I was silent, — I did not speak! I had even another chance; for after my return to St. Petersburg I found out that shortly before her death, his wife — your grandmother, Tatiána Vladímirovna — gave birth to a child, and that her baby was taken away by the Princess Bielsky, who agreed to educate and bring it up.”

“The Princess Bielsky!” It must be true, then; and the thought of her mother plunged Tanya in a whirl of the tenderest recollections.

“That baby,” the old man went on, “grew to be your own mother; and though her death left you an orphan, I might have made reparation even to you, had I been so minded. Yet still I said nothing. Nay, I even tried to conceal my crime by inducing my son to marry you, — monster that I was, — little dreaming that in my plot with him I was merely helping to dig his grave!”

Shaken by a tumult of feelings, Tanya struggled bravely to maintain her composure. Meanwhile, the banker began again, this time with a look of bitterness on his face.

“Why, then, am I here? Henceforth alone, with not a soul to give me the dear name of husband or the sweet name of father; with her who once called me son lying under the sod; bereaved of all these as I bereaved him and his, — what was there left to me but the hope of expiating at least something of my sin? Yes, Tatiána Vladímirovna, you have by

this time guessed why I came here. It was to take his place in captivity, to restore to its rightful owner my ill-gotten wealth, to send back to life and freedom him whom I have so cruelly wronged. Yet that was not to be. I found him dead, and in the consciousness of how utterly he had passed beyond the reach of any reparation I could make, my sin seemed multiplied a thousandfold. Before, I was only a robber; now, the crime of murder fastened itself upon me. Still I lived: how, do not ask me. One thing only was left. I sought out your grandfather's burial-place, — came to this hillock, and found my own name to mark the spot where my victim had fallen. Think of my remorse, — imagine, if you can, my despair! Bitter hours were those I spent in supplication; long I pleaded for some sign, some token, to the One who is merciful even to the vilest of us. Yet all seemed of no avail. Outcast of man, I was also to be spurned by God. Then suddenly you came, Tatiána Vladímírovna, descending upon my misery like an angel of forgiveness. And then I knew that my prayer had been answered."

Tanya's heart swelled in pity for him. Not caring to betray her emotion, she turned away. When again she essayed to look, the old man had fallen on his knees before her.

"Tatiána Vladímírovna, now that He will pardon me, will you not also forgive?"

Her eyes filled with tears. Placing her hand on his shoulder, she bade him rise.

But the scene had not yet reached its close. The banker's narrative, which had cast such sudden light into the dark places of Tanya's history, was now to connect Platónov with that history in a way as startling for him as it was unexpected for the rest. Thus far the propagandist had remained, with the others, a silent spectator. Though already familiar with the story of the Ilyin who had died in banishment, it had never occurred to him to ask the man's real name. Even the Pan Zborovski, in his narrative, neglected to repeat it. The banker had now himself revealed the mystery: it was the real Ilyin who stood before them. And again, as Platónov looked, there passed through his mind the panorama of events that had been imprinted on it when it was first his lot to be in banishment. Vividly they rose, those images, — the convict party on the road from the mine to the prison; the visit to the dying consumptive; the dimly lighted interior of the log cabin; the struggle of the dying man for breath; his last gift; and on the morrow the rude cross rising over the place of his burial. "Ilyin!" Why, the very scenery was familiar to him. Glancing at Tanya, who now had her eyes on the banker, he saw in her features the same profile as that which far down the Volga had first perplexed him; and lo! it was the same

profile as that which years before had been cast on the wall by the flickering flame in the hut of the lonely prisoner dying in exile. Thrusting his hand into his breast, he drew forth a time-worn locket, and handed it to the girl by his side, saying, "Tanya, he has spoken the truth. I knew your grandfather, and was with him in Siberia. I was present when he died, and before his death he gave me the portrait of your grandmother!"

The girl received the locket with trembling hands. It opened with scarcely an effort, disclosing, first, a soft, shining curl of ashen-hued hair, and on the reverse side a dainty miniature. A youthful face, radiant with love and beauty, smiled from the time-worn frame upon Tanya. It was the face of the Panna Hedwiga Konaplonski!

Tanya and Forsyth lingered for a day or two after the departure of Platónov, — just long enough to enable them, partly by converse with the banker, partly by cautious inquiries at the settlement (where they were known simply as English travelers), to gather up the threads still needed to complete the strange story whose general features they had heard at the grave-side. The information thus gained supplied new details. It explained at length, for example, the incident of the exchange of names. The friends learned that the exile party of which Ilyin and Pyasédski happened to be mem-

bers met, at one of the *étape* houses along the Siberian road, the company of "politicals" in which Líkhachov was marching to the Transbaikál. The banished officer at once recognized Pyasédski, whom he had met at the Pan Konaplonski's receptions; and the two men, having frequent opportunities for intercourse, soon grew devotedly attached to each other. It was their misfortune to be destined for different regions of eastern Siberia, so that for a time they looked forward to the approaching separation as a thing inevitable. But Líkhachov, who had heard of the custom among convicts of exchanging names with one another, hoped in this way to obtain the right to accompany his friend, whose society had now become indispensable to him. He had not long to wait. In the party to which Pyasédski belonged he had formed the acquaintance of the convict Ilyin, whom he found to be a young man of good manners and excellent address. It was the habit of the friends to chat together with the stranger on various subjects of common interest, and one day, intent on the plan he had formed, Líkhachov broached the matter to his new acquaintance. The young man promised to find somebody for the exchange. After being invisible for a couple of days, Ilyin returned, and, somewhat to the surprise of Líkhachov, offered himself. The place of his exile, he explained, did not matter to him; but he stood

greatly in need of money, and if an amount which he named were forthcoming, he was willing to surrender his place and name to Líkhachov. The officer was himself without means, but by a fortunate *rencontre* during the march from Europe, Pyasédski had received a considerable sum from a society of Polish patriots, and was therefore in a position to come to the aid of his friend. The exchange was then consummated. The real Líkhachov became Pavel Ilyin, while the defaulting bank cashier assumed the name and destination of the political exile.

In civilized communities, where the punitive system is well organized, — where exile does not exist, and where there are no vast distances for convicts to travel to their place of punishment, — such a transaction as that described is obviously an impossibility. It would be extremely difficult for a man to conceal the bargain from his fellow convicts: this would constitute a danger in itself. It would be even more difficult, under a method of dealing with prisoners that facilitates identification of them in a hundred ways, to hide the compact from the authorities. Yet in Siberia, where the marching parties traverse immense distances, the risk of detection is at a minimum. The great number of the exiles who have to be dealt with throws the work of identification largely upon the convict himself. To the exile system he is simply

a name, — it is enough for him to answer to it. Once an exchange of cognomens has been effected, no one dare disclose the bargain, and for this simple but all-sufficient reason, — that by acts of convention and courts of their own the convicts visit the death penalty upon the betrayer.

As the result, therefore, of a compact thus safeguarded, Ilyin went to the mine for which Líkhachov was destined, while Líkhachov found his hard labor where Ilyin should have toiled out his offense. Whence it happened that when the dying Galkin repented of his crimes, the pardon secured by him was delivered to the wrong man, — to the convict falsely calling himself Líkhachov. What Ilyin did with the opportunity thus thrown in his way the reader has already seen. To say that he snatched at his liberty altogether without qualms of conscience would be unjust. But they did not trouble him long. For a man of weak character, the temptation was too strong to be resisted. He liked the confinement and hardships of the mines as little as any. His work had proved severe beyond his expectation. So, suppressing his last faint compunctions, he pocketed the document which released him and set out for St. Petersburg.

Ilyin's first care, on reaching the capital, was to claim the property of the banished officer and get it converted into ready cash, — a task which,

having all the cunning of his fraud, he deemed it prudent to commit to a trustworthy firm of lawyers. His next step was to find his mother. To seek her in the town where he was so well known would have been perilous : he determined to await her at Kiev, a city to which she was in the habit, with thousands of others, of making an annual pilgrimage. As the time was already ripe for this yearly event in the religious life of the country, he set out for the famous metropolis of monasticism on the Dniepr. There for whole days he scanned in vain the faces of the pilgrims as, through every avenue of approach, they streamed into the holy city on their way to the world-renowned cloister. It was not till the fourth that his quest was successful. His mother had been praying to a favorite saint to restore her son, — she had offered the same prayer once a year ever since she lost him, — and lo ! the woman had not taken a dozen steps from the shrine where she had been kneeling before she caught sight of her boy. Ilyin took her with him to his hotel, where they had a long conversation ; telling her the secret of his sudden return from Siberia, he asked her to join him in the establishment which he proposed to set up at St. Petersburg. For a while the religious scruples of the woman dominated every other consideration. Yet the evil-doer was her son, after all ; she could not bear the idea of his return to

Siberia; she shrank still more from the thought of the cruel punishment that would overtake him were he to confess his fraud to the authorities. So, with inward prayers that she might be absolved from her sin on account of so great a temptation, which a mother's heart was quite unable to resist, she undertook to live with him as family nurse. It was arranged between them that she should return home, to remain there several weeks, and that after hearing finally from her son, she should join him in the capital.

When Ilyin reached St. Petersburg, he received from his lawyers a handsome sum as the proceeds of the Líkhachov estates. The greater part of this was invested; with the rest, he purchased a piece of residential property in the Liténia, and set himself up in business as a banker, — an occupation for which his early experiences had to some extent qualified him. He married a few years after his return from Siberia, and with the aid of his wife and mother — the former the daughter of an official — began housekeeping. It was to all appearances a happy household, yet the burden of Ilyin's wrong-doing lay upon it like a curse. First there was the fear perpetually on his mind that his fraud might be discovered by some surviving member of the Líkhachov family; nor were his apprehensions altogether calmed when, as the result of a private inquiry, he ascertained that

Likhachov had no surviving relative, that his wife was dead, and that his daughter was being brought up by the Princess Bielsky. Next there was a painful anxiety born of a strain in the relations between his wife and mother, — a strain that, beginning early in his domestic life, came, after the birth of Constantine, very near the breaking point. It was inexplicable to his wife why the nurse should not be treated as a domestic ; it was impossible for Ilyin to obtain for a reputed servant the respect which he held to be due to his mother ; while the slightest evidences of a lack of that respect — and they were abundantly forthcoming — wounded him beyond measure. At last, snatching at a heroic remedy, — for the situation had become intolerable, — he shared the secret of his life with the woman whose faith in him had doomed her at once to enjoy the wealth and bear the name of the man he had defrauded. The blow ultimately killed her, though for months she lingered broken-hearted, and the child of her grief was Sonya.

What, now, of the banished officer who, for friendship's sake, had unwittingly given away his inheritance ? He had a companion in adversity, it is true ; and for long the two men enjoyed each other's society as only friends in exile can. But there were cruel hardships to be endured, and under these the slender frame of Pyasédski at last

gave way. Likhachov was now alone. He remained at the mines until his time as a hard labor convict had been served out ; then, according to custom, he became a " free colonist," with the right to occupy a log hut, instead of the convict *kamera*, as well as to enjoy certain other privileges, among them being that of free choice of occupation, and liberty of movement within the limits of his place of exile. This change of his relation to the authorities simply enlarged his prison without making him any the less a prisoner ; and though the whilom dashing officer was permitted to make boots for a living, he was no less a convict among convicts than before. Not alone physically, but also mentally, his once robust health had been undermined. Torn from the first by that sense of wrong to which exile gives such keenness, he felt the crushing burden of his loneliness more than ever. In contact on the one hand with a wild nature that constantly reminded him of the wilderness of his own existence, he was on the other in enforced touch with hardened criminals who were immeasurably beneath him in everything that could make true companionship and was needed for its consolation. From mental tortures like these he had turned thousands of times to the thought of his family. Often he had written to his wife in the hope of receiving, if nothing more, at least an assurance that she still lived. His letters had all gone unanswered. The

profound melancholy that had long been his normal condition gradually passed into a state of mild, good-natured dementia ; his physical debility meanwhile increased ; and finally one more life that, under less untoward circumstances, might have been helpful to human advance, ebbed gently away amid the frozen wastes of Siberia.

CHAPTER XXIII

“BEQUEATHED BY BLEEDING SIRE TO SON”

IT is summer in the White Sea, — a well-nigh tropical season whose high sun, flooding this inland ocean with light, brings into picturesque relief the varied beauties of the fair island of Solovetsky. The gray granite walls of the historical monastery, the gold-hued lichen clinging to them, come down fringed with silver birches almost to the water's edge, while from the steamers that lie idly in front can be seen, in waters glassy, almost still as a mirror, the reflection of circular towers capped with red conical roofs, and, within the ramparts, of white churches, carrying on their green, pear-shaped cupolas the gilded cross of Orthodox Russia. It seems a place of siesta in the stirring life of a great empire : the musical bells of the churches chime languidly the quarter hours ; while over all the sea-gulls crowd and flutter, as if fearing no harm from man. Yet this is the busiest period in the life of the monastery. Beyond the great front, thousands of workmen, gathered from all the coasts of the White Sea peninsula, are engaged in making repairs, or in building schoolhouses and churches, —

not for remuneration, but for the love of God. Not less active are the members of the religious community itself, — in the open air, busied with agriculture, the raising of cattle, the planting or cutting down of trees ; or within doors, carrying on industries the most diverse, such as the making of ropes and cables, the weaving of cloth, the carving of wood, etc. Here also one meets the pilgrims, thousands of whom annually flock to Solovetsky, — some to give their gratuitous labor to the saints Zosim and Sabbate, and then return refreshed to the secular life ; others to abjure heresies, to atone for some act of rebellion against ecclesiastical authority, or to qualify themselves for the monkish office by twenty-five years of fasting and prayer ; still others to do penance for wrong-doing, to gain absolution for a life of selfishness and sin. The only idlers at Solovetsky are the fathers who have grown old in the service of the Church, or the few pilgrims who have been surprised by the late autumn of life in their long round of voluntary duty.

Among the pilgrim sojourners at Solovetsky is one whose earlier experiences have already become familiar to us. When first we met him, his beard was sparsely streaked with gray ; now the hair on head and chin has grown to full white. With the aid of a stick, yet with stumbling feet, he walks in and out among the shrines where he has

been wont to pray ; there he may be seen gazing with vacant stare upon the busy life around him. His attention is only apparent. Since his mother died in a Moscow monastery, he has lost interest in the sights and sounds of the world. The last sense to go is the sense of feeling. He feels the warm sun, and creeps out to bask in it a little longer. Resting against the rampart wall, he is so silent that even the sea-gulls come quite near him. When one, bolder than the rest, flutters to his shoulder, he moves his head slightly at the touch of its pinions, yet hardly seems to notice that it is there. The old man is waiting his time. He knows it cannot be long. Perhaps when the winter comes again, the white-winged messenger of death shall whisper to him the secret of a vaster ocean.

In the mean time there have been great changes in the little Volga town of E——. The place has ceased to be a centre of administrative exile : since the Platónov episode, the government has begun to send its “politicals” to parts of European Russia more remote from those lines of travel which connect the provinces with the metropolis and with Europe. Less than a year after Tanya’s departure the houses forming Známenskaya Street were swept away by one of the fires which periodically devastate this part of the country ; on the burnt area there have arisen large brick ware-

houses and neatly built offices to testify, not only to the enterprise of the Volga steam navigation companies, but also to the growing commercial prosperity of the place. And with the disappearance of the thoroughfare that once knew them, several of the personalities familiar to the reader have also passed away forever.

Among these is the wife of Buláiev. That Varvára Maxímovna should have been aroused from her morbid condition by the rude shock of personal grief was in some sort a blessing; yet neither the death of her child, nor the effort she made to find shelter from sorrow in the love of her husband, availed to give her permanent relief. What wonder that when the old wounds opened again, their pain should demand a new distraction? So when the war with Turkey broke forth, she enlisted as a sister of mercy, and followed the army across the Danube. Her early medical training now stood her in good stead; in spite of a frail constitution, she proved an indefatigable worker in the camp hospitals. Yet her nervous, excitable nature impelled her to efforts beyond her strength; the woman's energy soon spent itself in the fatigues of the campaign, — she died of sheer exhaustion during the siege of Plevna. Only one memorial of her descended to the living. It was the letter to her husband in which, foreseeing her early death, she urged him to give to Russia's

struggling sons and daughters the strong, deep love which he had borne to her. In that message the profoundest desires of her heart seemed to have found a voice.

A final word regarding the other personages of our story. Years have elapsed since Platónov made good his daring escape from Siberia. Traversing Chinese territory in safety, he finally reached Japan, and then proceeded *viâ* the United States to England. It was in London that he met Tanya and Forsyth; it was there, after a quiet wedding, that the exiles established themselves; there, too, that a group of merry children have since arisen to call them father and mother. The little ones are growing up with something that comes to them—in manners and speech, as well as in training—from their English environment; and yet, in the strange beauty of their features,—a beauty in which Oriental elements seem to mingle with the fair traits of the Slav,—they form a link in the adopted country with the first home far away. Two of them, at least, are associated in the mother's mind with special memories of her life in Russia,—Sonya, the namesake of her dead friend, and Assya, called after the child for whose life she vainly struggled at the peril of her own.

In the mean time Tanya has devoted her fortune to a work of national renaissance. The act of restitution by which the banker had made over

to her the proceeds of the Líkhachov estates, while on the one hand it found her ready to renounce all mere personal benefit, on the other placed within her power a means of good for Russia which she could not lightly set aside. For if, recalling his tortured life, it seemed sacrilege to touch for selfish ends the wealth of her grandfather, she felt herself no less under an obligation to apply it to those higher aims for the realization of which, had her ancestor lived, she felt sure he would himself have labored. And if anything was needed to define the direction of her endeavor, she had it in the shining example of Platónov's moderation and self-sacrifice. Not violence against individuals, still less the stimulation of movements that could only meet with bloody repression, but the slower, surer work of enlightened propaganda. This was the programme which guided her, — first, an effort to awaken the sympathy of western peoples with the self-denying apostles of reform at home; then, for her native land, so far as it could be contrived and circulated, a literature that, reaching all classes, informing the high-placed as well as the lowly, might carry the longing for a new national life even to the throne itself, until the iron inertia of the old system should yield like clay in the hands of the potter, and the people join with their whilom rulers in the joy of deliverance from a common despotism.

It is to such work as this — with the voice from a far-off grave forever sounding in their ears — that Tanya and Platónov have devoted themselves ; and though years have sped since first they met on English soil, enough has already been achieved to fill the future full with promise. Quietly, unostentatiously, but none the less persistently, — with voice as well as with pen, — have their efforts been put forth. The literary *salon* held by Tanya, at which some of the leading men and women of England have gathered, contributes powerfully to the same result. In these assemblies, that recall on a more magnificent scale the humbler reunions on the Volga, Forsyth is, of course, a frequent visitor. He has a professorship in one of the metropolitan colleges, writes occasionally in the magazines, and has long been at work on a book dealing with the history of the Slavs in Europe. It is for him like visiting Russia to run down to Platónov's after his work at the college is over. Since the death of his sister, his London lodging has grown painfully lonely. There is also another reason. Though he has outgrown his youthful passion, and can look upon his friend's happiness without being in the least touched, he does not care to be far away from the one who inspired that beautiful dream. More than all, he loves to romp with the children, and is happiest when, summer coming round, he can accompany the family on its annual excursion to some

quiet resort along the southern coast; for there the friends talk over the past, and live together again the moving scenes of which they were once a part.

Tanya and Platónov are indeed happy. Amid parental preoccupations, but also with interests of heart and mind that make it beautiful, their life flows on, unhasting and unresting. They have not ceased to be lovers, and they remain patriots to the heart's core. In sacrifice, but also in faith, they spend the full, strong years of their exile. Darkness, it is true, still broods over the world of their hopes; yet tardy as the light may be, they know that it is trembling there below the hills and the sea, and must sooner or later streak the sky with the rosy-fingered radiance of morning.

J
.

The Riverside Press

*Electrotyped and printed by H. O. Houghton & Co.
Cambridge, Mass., U. S. A.*

RUSSIA AND THE RUSSIANS

BY EDMUND NOBLE

Author of

"The Russian Revolt."

12mo, \$1.50



The London Daily News says : —

"Mr. Edmund Noble is master of the art of writing a short book on a great subject. It is not an easy art ; yet in a time of infinite curiosity in matters social and political, its exercise is needful for the millions who have no leisure for detailed study. In little more than two hundred and seventy pages Mr. Noble presents to us the chief vital facts of Russian history from the beginnings of the Slav movement eastwards to the occupation of Port Arthur and Talienwan ; and not only the facts but their inter-relations. The import of Nihilism and of religious schism, the interpenetration between religion and politics, the general motive of Russian literature, the change from conspiracy by assassination to conspiracy by agitation, are set forth in short, broadly written chapters, which, as generalized statements, leave nothing to be desired."



HOUGHTON, MIFFLIN & CO., BOSTON

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 10030 665 1

